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The problem of heroin

JAMES Q. WILSON, MARK H. MOORE, & I. DAVID WHEAT, JR.

It is now widely believed that much of the recent increase in predatory crime is the result of heroin addicts supporting their habits; that heroin use has become a middle-class white as well as lower-class black phenomenon of alarming proportions; and that conventional law-enforcement efforts to reduce heroin use have not only failed but may in fact be contributing to the problem by increasing the cost of the drug for the user, leading thereby to the commission of even more crimes and the corruption of even more police officers. These generally held opinions have led to an intense debate over new policy initiatives to deal with heroin, an argument usually described as one between the advocates of a "*law-enforcement*" policy (which includes shutting off opium supplies in Turkey and heroin-manufacturing laboratories in France, arresting more heroin dealers in the United States, and the use of civil commitment procedures, detoxification centers, and methadone maintenance programs) and the partisans of a "*decriminalization*" policy (which includes legalization of the use or possession of heroin, at least for adults, and the distribution of heroin to addicts at low cost, or zero cost, through government-controlled clinics).

The intensity of the debate tends to obscure the fact that most of the widely accepted opinions on heroin use are not supported by

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much evidence; that the very concept of "addict" is ambiguous and somewhat misleading; and that many of the apparently reasonable assumptions about heroin use and crime—such as the assumption that the legalization of heroin would dramatically reduce the rate of predatory crime, or that intensified law enforcement drives the price of heroin up, or that oral methadone is a universal substitute for heroin, or that heroin use spreads because of the activities of "pushers" who can be identified as such—turn out on closer inspection to be unreasonable, unwarranted, or at least open to more than one interpretation.

"Punitive" vs. "medical" approaches

Most important, the current debate has failed to make explicit, or at least to clarify, the philosophical principles underlying the competing positions. Those positions are sometimes described as the "*punitive*" versus the "*medical*" approach, but these labels are of little help. For one thing, they are far from precise: Putting an addict in jail is certainly "punitive," but putting him in a treatment program, however benevolent its intentions, may be seen by him as no less "punitive." Shifting an addict from heroin to methadone may be "medical" if he makes the choice voluntarily—but is it so if the alternative to methadone maintenance is a criminal conviction for heroin possession? And while maintaining an addict on heroin (as is done in Great Britain and as has been proposed for the United States) is not "punitive" in any legal sense, neither is it therapeutic in any medical sense. Indeed, there seem to be no forms of therapy that will "cure" addicts in any large numbers of their dependence on heroin. Various forms of intensive psychotherapy and group-based "personality restructuring" may be of great value to certain drug users, but by definition they can reach only very small numbers of persons and perhaps only for limited periods of time.

But the fundamental problem with these and other labels is that they avoid the central question: Does society have only the right to protect itself (or its members) from the harmful acts of heroin users, or does it have in addition the responsibility (and thus the right) to improve the well-being (somehow defined) of heroin users themselves? In one view, the purpose of the law is to insure the maximum amount of liberty for everyone, and an action of one person is properly constrained by society if—and only if—it has harmful consequences for another person. This is the utilitarian conception of the public interest and, when applied to heroin use, it leads such otherwise unlike men as Milton Friedman, Herbert Packer, and Thomas

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Szasz to oppose the use of criminal sanctions for heroin users. Professor Packer, for example, recently wrote that a desirable aspect of liberalism is that it allows people "to choose their own roads to hell if that is where they want to go."

In another view, however, society has an obligation to enhance the "well-being" of each of its citizens even with respect to those aspects of their lives that do not directly impinge on other people's lives. In this conception of the public good, all citizens of a society are bound to be affected—indirectly but perhaps profoundly and permanently —if a significant number are permitted to go to hell in their own way. A society is therefore unworthy if it permits, or is indifferent to, any activity that renders its members inhuman or deprives them of their essential (or "natural") capacities to judge, choose, and act. If heroin use is such an activity, then its use should be proscribed. Whether that proscription is enforced by mere punishment or by obligatory therapy is a separate question.

The alternative philsophical principles do not necessarily lead to diametrically opposed policies. A utilitarian might conclude, for example, that heroin use is so destructive of family life that society has an interest in proscribing it (though he is more likely, if experience is any guide, to allow the use of heroin and then deal with its effect on family life by advocating social services to "help problem families"). And a moralist might decide that though heroin should be illegal, any serious effort to enforce that law against users would be so costly in terms of other social values (privacy, freedom, the integrity of officialdom) as not to be worth it, and he thus might allow the level of enforcement to fall to a point just short of that at which the tutelary power of the law would be jeopardized. Still, even if principles do not uniquely determine policies, thinking clearly about the former is essential to making good judgments about the latter. And to think clearly about the former, it is as important to ascertain the effects of heroin on the user as it is to discover the behavior of a user toward society.

The user

There is no single kind of heroin user. Some persons may try it once, find it unpleasant, and never use it again; others may "dabble" with it on occasion but, though they find it pleasurable, will have no trouble stopping; still others may use it on a regular basis but in a way that does not interfere with their work. But some persons, who comprise a large (if unknown) percentage of all those who experiment

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with heroin, develop a relentless and unmanageable craving for the drug such that their life becomes organized around it: searching for it, using it, enjoying it, and searching for more. Authorities differ on whether all such persons—whom we shall call "addicts," though the term is not well-defined and its scientific status is questionable—are invariably physiologically dependent on the drug, as evidenced by painful "withdrawal" symptoms that occur whenever they cease using it. Some persons may crave the drug without being dependent, others may be dependent without craving it. We need not resolve these definitional and medical issues, however, to recognize that many (but not all) heroin users are addicts in the popular sense of the term.

No one knows how many users of various kinds there are, at what rate they have been increasing in number, or what happens to them at the end of their "run." That they *have* increased in number is revealed, not only by the testimony of police and narcotics officers, but by figures on deaths attributed to heroin. Between 1967 and 1971, the number of deaths in Los Angeles County attributed to heroin use more than tripled, and although improved diagnostic skills in the coroner's office may account for some of this increase, it does not (in the opinion of the University of Southern California student task force report) account for it all. A Harvard student task force has used several techniques to estimate the size of the heroin-user population in Boston, and concludes that there was a tenfold increase in the decade of the 1960's. Why that increase occurred, and whether it will continue, are matters about which one can only speculate. The USC group estimated that there are at least fifty thousand addicts in Los Angeles; the Harvard group estimated that there are six thousand in Boston; various sources conventionally refer (with what accuracy we do not know) to the "hundred thousand" addicts in New York.

No one has proposed a fully satisfactory theory to explain the apparent increase in addiction. There are at least four speculative possibilities, some or all of which may be correct. The rise in real incomes during the prosperity of the 1960's may simply have made possible the purchase of more heroin as it made possible the purchase of more automobiles or color television sets. The cult of personal liberation among the young may have led to greater experimentation with heroin as it led to greater freedom in dress and manners and the development of a rock music culture. The war in Vietnam may have both loosened social constraints and given large numbers of young soldiers easy access to heroin supplies and ample incentive (the boredom, fears, and demoralization caused by the war) to dabble in the drug. Finally, the continued disintegration of the lower-income,

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especially black, family living in the central city may have heightened the importance of street peer groups to the individual and thus (in ways to be discussed later in this essay) placed him in a social environment highly conducive to heroin experimentation. There are, in short, ample reasons to suppose (though few facts to show) that important changes in both the supply of and demand for heroin occurred during the last decade.

Heavy users of heroin, according to their own testimony, tend to be utterly preoccupied with finding and consuming the drug. Given an unlimited supply (that is, given heroin at zero cost), an addict will "shoot up" three to five times a day. Given the price of heroin on the black market—currently, about $10 a bag, with varying numbers of bags used in each fix—some addicts may be able to shoot up only once or twice a day. The sensations associated with heroin use by most novice addicts are generally the same: keen anticipation of the fix, the "rush" when the heroin begins to work in the bloodstream, the euphoric "high," the drowsy or "nodding" stage as the "high" wears off, and then the beginnings of the discomfort caused by the absence of heroin. For the veteran addict, the "high" may no longer be attainable, except perhaps at the risk of a lethal overdose. For him, the sensations induced by heroin have mainly to do with anesthetizing himself against withdrawal pain—and perhaps against most other feelings as well—together with a ritualistic preoccupation with the needle and the act of injection.

The addict is intensely present-oriented. Though "dabblers" or other episodic users may save heroin for a weekend fix, the addict can rarely save any at all. Some, for example, report that they would like to arise in the morning with enough heroin for a "wake-up" fix, but almost none have the self-control to go to sleep at night leaving unused heroin behind. Others report getting enough heroin to last them for a week, only to shoot it all the first day. How many addicts living this way can manage a reasonably normal family and work life is not known, but clearly many cannot. Some become heroin dealers in order to earn money, but a regular heavy user seldom has the self-control to be successful at this enterprise for long. Addicts-turned-dealers frequently report a sharp increase in their heroin use as they consume much of their sales inventory.

It is this craving for the drug, and the psychological states induced by its use, that are the chief consequences of addiction; they are also the most important consequences about which, ultimately, one must have a moral or political view, whatever the secondary effects of addiction that are produced by current public policy. At the same

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time, one should not suppose that all of these secondary effects can be eliminated by changes in policy. For example, while there are apparently no specific pathologies—serious illnesses or physiological deterioration—that are known to result from heroin use *per se*, the addict does run the risk of infections caused by the use of unsterile needles, of poisoning as a result of shooting an overdose (or a manageable dose that has been cut with harmful products), and of thrombosed veins as a result of repeated injections. Some of these risks could be reduced if heroin were legally available in clinics operated by physicians, but they could not be eliminated unless literally everyone wishing heroin were given it in whatever dosage, short of a lethal one, he wished. In Great Britain, where pure heroin is legally available at low prices, addicts still have medical problems arising out of their use of the drug—principally, unsterile self-injections, involuntary overdoses, and voluntary overdoses (that is, willingly injecting more than they should in hopes of obtaining a new "high"). If, as will be discussed below, heroin were injected under a doctor's supervision (as it is not in England), the risk of sepsis and of overdoses would be sharply reduced—but at the cost of making the public heroin clinic less attractive to addicts who wish to consume not merely a maintenance dose but a euphoria-producing (and therefore risky) one.

Why heroin?

No generally accepted theory supported by well-established facts exists to explain why some persons but not others become addicts. It is easy to make a list of factors that increase (statistically, at least) the risk of addiction: Black males living in low-income neighborhoods, coming from broken or rejecting families, and involved in "street life" have much higher chances of addiction than upper-middle-class whites in stable families and "normal" occupations. But some members of the latter category *do* become addicted and many members of the former category do not; why this should be the case, no one is sure. It is easy to argue that heroin use occurs only among people who have serious problems (and thus to argue that the way to end addiction is to solve the underlying problems), but in fact many heavy users seem to have no major problems at all. Isidor Chein and his co-workers in their leading study of addiction in New York (*The Road to H*) found that between a quarter and a third of addicts seemed to have no problems for which heroin use was a compensation.

Though we cannot predict with much confidence who will and

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who will not become an addict, we can explain why heroin is used and how its use spreads. The simple fact is that heroin use is intensely pleasurable, for many people more pleasurable than anything else they might do. Heroin users will have experimented with many drugs, and when heroin is hard to find they may return to alcohol or other drugs, but for the vast majority of users heroin remains the drug of choice. The nature of the pleasure will vary from person to person —or, perhaps, the interpretive description of that pleasure will vary— but the desire for it remains the governing passion of the addicts' lives. All of us enjoy pleasure; an addict is a person who has found the supreme pleasure and the means to make that pleasure recur.

This fact helps explain why "curing" addiction is so difficult (for many addicts, virtually impossible) and how new addicts are recruited. Addicts sent to state or federal hospitals to be detoxified—i.e., to be withdrawn from heroin use—almost invariably return to such use after their release, simply because using it is so much more pleasurable than not using it, regardless of cost. Many addicts, probably a majority, resist and resent oral methadone maintenance because methadone, though it can prevent withdrawal pains, does not, when taken orally, supply them with the euphoric "high" they associate with heroin. (The intravenous use of methadone will produce a "high" comparable to that of heroin. The oral use of methadone is seen by addicts as a way to avoid the pain of heroin withdrawal but not as an alternative source of a "high.") Persons willingly on methadone tend to be older addicts who are "burned out," i.e., physically and mentally run down by the burdens of maintaining a heroin habit. A younger addict still enjoying his "run" (which may last five or 10 years) will be less inclined to shift to methadone.

The "contagion" model

When asked how they got started on heroin, addicts almost universally give the same answer: They were offered some by a friend. They tried it, often in a group setting, and found they liked it. Though not every person who tries it will like it, and not every person who likes it will become addicted to it, a substantial fraction (perhaps a quarter) of first users become regular and heavy users. Heroin use spreads through peer-group contacts, and those peer groups most vulnerable to experimenting with it are those that include a person who himself has recently tried it and whose enthusiasm for it is contagious. In fact, so common is this process that many observers use the word "contagious" or "contagion" deliberately—the spread of

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heroin use is in the nature of an epidemic in which a "carrier" (a recent and enthusiastic convert to heroin) "infects" a population with whom he is in close contact.

A recent study in Chicago has revealed in some detail how this process of infection occurs. Patrick H. Hughes and Gail A. Crawford found that a major heroin "epidemic" occurred in Chicago after World War II, reaching a peak in 1949, followed by a decline in the number of new cases of addiction during the 1950's, with signs of a new epidemic appearing in the early 1960's. They studied closely 11 neighborhood-sized epidemics that they were able to identify in the late 1960's, each producing 50 or more new addicts. In the great majority of cases, not only was the new user turned on by a friend, but the friend was himself a novice user still exhilarated by the thrill of a "high." Both recruit and initiator tended to be members of a small group that had already experimented heavily with many drugs and with alcohol. These original friendship groups broke up as the heavy users formed new associations in order to maintain their habits. Strikingly, the new user usually does not seek out heroin the first time he uses it, but rather begins to use it almost fortuitously, by the accident of personal contact in a polydrug subculture. In these groups, a *majority* of the members usually try heroin after it is introduced by one of them, though not all of these become addicted.

Such a theory explains the very rapid rates of increase that have occurred in a city such as Boston. The number of new users will be some exponential function of the number of initial users. Obviously, this geometric growth rate would soon, if not checked by other factors, make addicts of us all. Since we are not all going to become addicts, other factors must be at work, though their nature is not well understood. They may include "natural immunity" (some of us may find heroin unpleasant), breaks in the chain of contagion (caused by the absence of any personal linkages between peer groups that are using heroin and peer groups that are not), and the greater difficulty of finding a supply of heroin in some communities than others. *Perhaps most important, the analogy between heroin use and disease is imperfect: We do not choose to contract smallpox from a friend, but we do choose to use heroin offered by a friend.*

The myth of the "pusher"

If heroin use is something we choose, then the moral and empirical judgments one makes about heroin become important. If a person thinks heroin use wrong, or if he believes that heroin use can cause

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a serious pathology, then, other things being equal, he will be less likely to use it than if he made the opposite judgments. Chein found that the belief that heroin use was wrong was a major reason given by heroin "dabblers" for not continuing in its use. The extent to which the belief in the wrongness of heroin use depends on its being illegal is unknown—but it is interesing to note that many addicts tend to be strongly opposed to legalizing heroin.

The peer-group/contagion model also helps explain why the fastest increase in heroin use has been among young people, with the result that the average age of known addicts has fallen sharply in the last few years. In Boston, the Harvard student group found that one quarter of heroin users seeking help from a public agency were under the age of 18, and 80 per cent were under the age of 25. A study done at American University found that the average age at which identifiable addicts in Washington, D.C., began using heroin was under 19. Though stories of youngsters under 15 becoming addicts are commonplace, most studies place the beginning of heavy use between the ages of 17 and 19. It is persons in this age group, of course, who are most exposed to the contagion: They are intensely involved in peer groups; many have begun to become part of "street society," because they had either dropped out of or graduated from schools; and they are most likely to suffer from boredom and a desire "to prove themselves." It is claimed that many of those who become serious addicts "mature out" of their heroin use sometime in their thirties, in much the same way that many juvenile delinquents spontaneously cease committing criminal acts when they get older. Unfortunately, not much is known about "maturing out," and it is even possible that it is a less common cause of ending heroin use than death or imprisonment.

If this view of the spread of addiction is correct, then it is pointless to explain heroin use as something that "pushers" inflict on unsuspecting youth. The popular conception of a stranger in a dirty trench coat hanging around schoolyards and corrupting innocent children is largely myth—indeed, given what we know about addiction, it would almost have to be myth. No dealer in drugs is likely to risk doing business with strangers. The chances of apprehension are too great and the profits from dealing with friends too substantial to make missionary work among unknown "straights" worthwhile. And the novice user is far more likely to take the advice of a friend, or to respond to the blandishments of a peer group, than to take an unfamiliar product from an anonymous pusher.

An important implication of the peer-group/contagion model is

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that programs designed to treat or control established addicts may have little effect on the mechanism whereby heroin use spreads. Users tend to be "infectious" only early in their heroin careers (later, all their friends are addicts and the life style seems less glamorous), and at this stage they are not likely to volunteer for treatment or to come to the attention of police authorities. In the Chicago study, for example, Hughes and Crawford found that police efforts directed at addiction were intensified only after the peak of the epidemic had passed, and though arrests increased sharply, they were principally of heavily addicted regular users, not of the infectious users. *No matter whether one favors a medical or a law-enforcement approach to heroin, the optimum strategy depends crucially on whether one's objective is to "treat" existing addicts or to prevent the recruitment of new ones.*

Crime and heroin

The amount of crime committed by addicts is no doubt large, but exactly how large is a matter of conjecture. And most important, the amount of addict crime undertaken solely to support the habit, *and thus the amount by which crime would decrease if the price of heroin fell to zero, is unknown.* Estimates of the proportion of all property crime committed by addicts range from 25 to 67 per cent. Whatever the true fraction, there is no reason to assume that property crimes would decline by that fraction if heroin became free. Some addicts are criminals before they are addicts and would remain criminals if their addiction, like their air and water, cost them virtually nothing. Furthermore, some addicts who steal to support their habit come to regard crime as more profitable than normal employment. They would probably continue to steal to provide themselves with an income even after they no longer needed to use part of that income to buy heroin.

Just as it is wrong to suppose that an unwitting youth has heroin "pushed" on him, so also it is wrong to suppose that these youth only then turn to crime to support their habit. Various studies of known addicts have shown that between half and three quarters were known to be delinquent *before* turning to drugs. In a random sample of adult Negro males studied in St. Louis (14 per cent of whom turned out to have records for using or selling narcotics), 60 per cent of those who tried heroin and 73 per cent of those who became addicted to it had previously acquired a police record. Put another way, one quarter of the delinquents, but only four per cent of the non-delinquents, became heroin addicts.

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That addicts are recruited disproportionately from the ranks of those who already have a criminal history may be a relatively recent phenomenon. The history of heroin use in New York City compiled by Edward Preble and John J. Casey, Jr. suggests that in the period before 1951 heroin use grew slowly and often occurred through "snorting" (inhaling the powder) rather than "mainlining" (injecting liquefied heroin into a vein). The heroin used was of high quality and low cost, and its consumption took place in social settings in which many users were not criminals but rather entertainers, musicians, and the like. The heroin epidemic that began around 1951 was caused by the new popularity of the drug among younger people on the streets, especially street gang members looking for a new "high." (Indeed, one theory of the break-up of those gangs romanticized in *West Side Story* is that heroin use became a status symbol, such that the young man "nodding" on the corner or hustling and dealing in dope became the figure to be emulated, rather than the fighter and the leader of gang wars. A group of heavy addicts, each of whom is preoccupied with his own "high," will soon find collective action—and thus gang life—all but impossible.) Mainlining became commonplace, the increased demand led to a rise in price and a decline in quality of the available heroin, and the level of heroin-connected crime increased.

Some supportive evidence for the increase in the recruitment of addicts from among the ranks of the criminal is found in a study of white male Kentucky addicts carried out by John A. O'Donnell. He traced the careers of 266 such persons who had been admitted to the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington from its opening in 1935. The earlier the year in which the person first became addicted, the less the likelihood of his having a prior criminal record. Only five per cent of those addicted before 1920, but 47 per cent of those addicted between 1950 and 1959, had a criminal record before they became addicted. Furthermore, the younger the age of a man when he first became addicted, the more likely he was to have committed criminal acts *before* addiction. The proportion of addicts with criminal records, and perhaps the rate of increase of those with such records, would probably be greater among a more typical population of addicts—for example, among urban blacks.

Once addicted, however, persons are likely to commit more crimes than they would have had they not become addicted. The common and tragic testimony of street addicts dwells upon their need to find the money with which to support the habit, and this means for many of them "hustling," stealing heroin from other users,

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dealing in heroin themselves, or simply begging. The O'Donnell study in Kentucky provides statistical support for this view, though no estimate of the amount by which crime increases as a result of addiction.

The kinds of crimes committed by addicts are fairly well known. Selling heroin is perhaps the most important of these—the Hudson Institute estimated that almost half of the annual heroin consumption in New York is financed by selling heroin and related services (for example, selling or renting the equipment needed for injecting heroin). Of the non-drug crimes, shoplifting, burglary, and prostitution account for the largest proportion of addict income used for drug purchases—perhaps 40 to 50 per cent. Though the addict wants money, he will not confine himself only to those crimes where property is taken with no threat to personal safety. Muggings and armed robberies will be committed regularly by some addicts and occasionally by many; even in a burglary, violence may result if the addict is surprised by the victim while ransacking the latter's home or store.

The amount of property taken by addicts is large, but probably not as large as some of the more popular estimates would have us believe. Max Singer (in *The Public Interest*, No. 23, Spring 1971) has shown that those who make these estimates—usually running into the billions of dollars per year in New York City alone—fail to reconcile their figures with the total amount of property known or suspected to be stolen. He estimated that no more than $500 million a year is lost to both addicted and non-addicted burglars, shoplifters, pickpockets, robbers, and assorted thieves in New York each year. If *all* of that were taken by addicts (which of course it isn't) and if there were 100,000 addicts in the city, then the average addict would be stealing about $5,000 worth of goods a year—not a vast sum. Even the more conservative figure of 60,000 addicts would raise the maximum average theft loss per addict to only $8,000.

Despite the fact that many addicts were criminals before addiction and would remain criminals even if they ended their addiction, and despite the fact that the theft losses to addicts are considerably exaggerated, there is little doubt that addiction produces a significant increase in criminality of two kinds—stealing from innocent victims and selling heroin illegally to willing consumers. More accurately, the heroin black market provides incentives for at least two kinds of anti-social acts—theft (with its attendant fear) and further spreading the use of heroin.

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Heroin and law enforcement

The critics of the "punitive" mode of attacking heroin distribution argue that law enforcement has not only failed to protect society against these social costs, it has in fact increased those costs by driving up the price of heroin and thus the amount of criminality necessary to support heroin habits. If by this they mean that law enforcement has "failed" because it has not reduced the heroin traffic to zero—and anything short of this will increase the price of heroin —then of course the statement is true. It would be equally true—and equally misleading—to say that most medical approaches have "failed" because the vast majority of persons who undergo voluntary treatment at Lexington or other hospitals return to heroin use when they are released.

Apart from methadone maintenance, which deserves separate discussion, existing therapeutic methods for treating heroin addiction are extremely expensive and have low success rates. Various investigators have found a relapse rate for addicts discharged from hospitals after having undergone treatment ranging between 90 and 95 per cent. Over time, a certain fraction of those treated will begin to become permanently abstinent—Dr. George Vaillant estimates it at about two per cent a year—but most of those *do not do so voluntarily.* The Kentucky males studied by O'Donnell displayed relatively high rates of abstinence after release from the hospital, but this was due mostly to the fact that heroin itself became more or less unavailable in Kentucky. The New York addicts studied by Vaillant who had been released from the same hospital showed much lower rates of abstinence, in part because heroin was easy to find in New York; those who did abstain tended to be those who were placed under some form of compulsory community supervision, such as intensive parole. And even these did not become entirely "clean"—typically they found a substitute for heroin, and most often became alcoholics.

The fact that medical approaches do not "cure" addiction, and especially do not cure it if the addict must volunteer for them, need not trouble the critics of the law-enforcement approach if they believe that only the tangible social cost of addiction (e.g., crime) and not addiction itself is a problem, or if they concede that addiction is a problem but think it wrong for addicts to be compelled to obtain help.

But if law enforcement at present fails to prevent the "external" costs of addiction (i.e., crime), or may in fact increase those costs, this will also remain true under any likely alternative public policy,

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unless one is willing to support the complete legalization of heroin for all who wish it. Yet no advocate of "decriminalizing" heroin with whom we are familiar supports total legalization. Most favor some version of the "British system," by which heroin is dispensed at low cost in government-controlled clinics to known addicts in order to maintain them in their habit. Almost no one seems to favor allowing any drugstore to sell, or any doctor to prescribe, heroin to anybody who wants it.

The reason for this reluctance is rarely made explicit. Presumably, it is either political expediency (designed to make the British system more palatable to a skeptical American public) or an unspoken moral reservation about the desirability of heroin use *per se*, apart from its tangible social cost. We suspect that the chief reason is the latter: One's moral sensibilities are indeed shocked by the prospect of young children buying heroin at the drugstore the same way they now buy candy. And if one finds that scene wrong or distasteful, then one should also find the prospect of an adult non-user having cheap access to heroin wrong or distasteful, unless one is willing to make a radical (and on medical grounds, hard to defend) distinction between what is good for a person under the age of (say) 18 and what is good for a person over that age.

The total decriminalization of heroin would lead, all evidence suggests, to a sharp increase in its use. Indeed, precisely because of such an increase, the British in 1968 abandoned the practice of allowing physicians to prescribe heroin to anyone they wished.

The British system

Under post-1968 British policy, the sale of heroin to non-users or to novice users is illegal. In clinics authorized to prescribe heroin, the doctor must not do so unless he is certain the patient is addicted and truly needs the drug, and he should then prescribe conservatively. The aim is to maintain the patient with enough heroin to be free of withdrawal pains but not with enough so that he will have any surplus to sell or give to others.

The result is that a black market in heroin still exists in Britain. As Griffith Edwards (of the Addiction Research Unit, Institute of Psychiatry, London) has pointed out, the British system "in fact cuts down but in no way eliminates the potential population of black-market customers." That market, the size of which is unknown but in his view is not negligible, is made up of "customers" of the clinic system who want larger doses in order to get a "high"

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(or a better "high"), present addicts who for various reasons do not wish to register with the government, and would-be or novice users who would like to try heroin.

If this is a problem in Britain, which has only two thousand or so addicts, it would be a much greater problem in the United States, where there are one hundred or two hundred times as many addicts, a large fraction of whom are quite young. Those who are willing to be maintained on low dosages in a government clinic are probably those who fear withdrawal pains more than they cherish the heroin "high"; in short, they are likely to be addicts who have passed beyond the stage of missionary zeal about an exciting new thrill. They may be quite similar to those addicts in the United States who volunteer for methadone maintenance. (This is all supposition, for we know of no detailed comparative studies of British and American addicts. We think it a reasonable supposition, however.) It is quite possible, in short, that the number of addict-zealots in the United States would be large enough to continue the spread of heroin to new users and to maintain an active black market, even if the United States were to adopt some version of the British clinic method.

It is important to bear in mind that the residual black market need not be large in order to supply novice users and thus continue the infection/recruitment process. Even if the vast majority of confirmed addicts registered to receive government heroin (which is unlikely, unless the government were willing to supply euphoria-producing rather than simply maintenance doses), the increase in the number of new addicts among suspectible groups could continue to be quite rapid and to be supplied out of a black market of modest proportions.

Furthermore, there is some reason to believe that British and American addicts are sufficiently different so that an American clinic system would not attract as large a proportion of the total addict population as have the British clinics. A member of the Addiction Research Institute in London is quoted by Edgar May as observing that the typical British addict is likely to be a "middle-class drop-out" rather than a lower-class "oblivion-seeker." The contemporary British addict, in short, may be more similar to the American addict before 1920 (when the use of opiates was increasing in the middle classes) than to the American addict of today. The difference, if correct, may have profound consequences for the efficacy of control techniques. The use of opiates among middle-class Americans *dropped* sharply after they were made illegal and

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law enforcement got underway, just as the use of heroin by the British has apparently stabilized since heroin was made illegal except through licensed clinics.

This possibility is worth bearing in mind when we interpret accounts of the British system. The success of the plan (that is, the apparent stabilization in the number of addicts and the absence of addict-related crime) is in part the result of imposing on a middle-class addict population *stricter* controls than had once existed—and doing so after the rather easy availability of heroin had resulted in a *forty-fold* increase in the number of known addicts during the preceding 15 years. If the size of the American addict population grew rapidly when possession of heroin was already illegal, it is a bit hard to understand what there is in either the British experience or our own that would lead one to conclude that the number of addicts here would be stabilized or reduced if heroin were made easier to get. At best, decriminalization would reduce somewhat the size of the black market (while simultaneously lowering prices in that market) and reduce by an unknown but probably significant fraction the amount of crime committed by those addicts who were willing to avail themselves of the maintenance doses to be obtained at government clinics.

The effectiveness of law enforcement

Under any conceivable American variant of the British system, then, a law-enforcement strategy would remain an important component of government policy. Rather than simply rejecting law enforcement as "punitive" (and therefore "medieval," "barbarian," counterproductive, or whatever), one ought to consider what it might accomplish under various circumstances.

The assumption that law enforcement has no influence on the size of the addict population but does have an effect on the price of heroin (and thus on crime committed to meet that higher price) rests chiefly on the showing that the majority of known addicts have been arrested at least once; that during his life expectancy, any addict is virtually certain to be arrested; and that, despite this, the addict returns to his habit and to the criminal life needed to sustain it. These facts are essentially correct. The difficulty lies in equating "law enforcement" with "arrest."

Thousands of addicts are arrested every year; a very large proportion are simply returned to the street—by the police, who wish to use them as informants, or by judges who wish to place them on

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probation or under suspended sentences because they believe (rightly) that a prison term will not cause their cure or rehabilitation. Only a few addicts are singled out for very severe punishment. We do not know for how many addicts arrest is simply a revolving door. In Boston, however, Wheat has done a careful study of the relationship between the level of law enforcement, defined as the "expected costs" of an arrest to the user, and the number of addicts in the city. By "expected costs," Wheat means the probability of being arrested multiplied by the probability of being sentenced to prison and the length of the average prison sentence. Though his numerical estimates are complex and open to criticism, the general relationship between the number of heroin users and the expected "costs" to the addict of law enforcement is quite striking—the "costs" declined sharply between 1961 and 1970 while the estimated number of addicts in Boston increased about tenfold. Furthermore, the largest increases in the number of addicts tended to follow years in which the certainty and severity of law enforcement were the lowest.

More specifically: (1) From 1961 to 1965, the estimated proportion of users arrested by the police declined (it started to increase again in 1966); (2) the chances that an arrested user would be sentenced to jail declined from better than one in two in 1960 to only one in 10 in 1970; and (3) the length of the average sentence imposed fell from about 23 months in 1961 to fewer than 15 months in 1969, though there were some intervening ups and downs. By 1970, the chance of a heroin addict being sent to jail during any given year was rather remote. We do not know whether similar changes occurred in other cities, though given the cause of the changes—the growing (and erroneous) view among legislators and judges that addicts should be referred to psychiatrists for (nonexistent) "help"—we suspect that many cities, influenced by the same sentiments, may have experienced the same changes. In Chicago, for example, Hughes and his colleagues have shown that the number of arrests of addicts, and the average sentence given to those convicted, rose dramatically during or just after the heroin epidemic of 1947-1950, but by 1955 the length of sentence had begun to fall again and by 1960 it was almost down to the pre-war level.

If there is a relationship between law enforcement and heroin use, it may result from one or both of two processes. An increase in legal penalties may deter the novice user from further use or it may deter the confirmed addict-dealer (or if he is jailed, prevent him entirely) from selling to a potential user. Lessening the "costs"

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of the penalty may either embolden the novice user and potential users, or improve their access to a supplier, or both.

There is some clinical evidence that both processes are in fact at work. Robert Schasre's study of 40 Mexican-American heroin users who had stopped shooting heroin revealed that over half (22) did so *involuntarily* after they had lost their source of supply—their dealer had been arrested or had lost *his* source, or the user himself had moved to another community where he could find no dealer. Of the remaining 18, who stopped "voluntarily," most did so in response to some social or institutional pressure; in a third of these cases, that pressure was having been arrested or having a friend who was arrested on a narcotics charge.

Indeed, one could as easily make the argument that law enforcement has not even been tried as the argument that it has been tried and failed. Before making it, the authors must reassure the reader that we are under no illusion that prison sentences "cure" addiction and that we harbor no desire to "seek vengeance" on the addict. We would make the same argument if one substituted, for sentences to prison, sentences to Synanon, Daytop, methadone maintenance, or expensive psychiatric clinics. *The central point is that only a small proportion of heroin addicts will voluntarily seek and remain in any form of treatment, care, or confinement*—unless that care involves the free dispensation of heroin itself.

One can imagine a variety of law-enforcement strategies that would have a powerful effect on the number of addicts on the street, and thus on the number of street crimes they might commit and other harm they might do to others and themselves. One could arrest every known addict and send him to a "heroin quarantine center" with comfortable accommodations and intensive-care programs. Or one could arrest every known addict and send him back onto the street under a "pledge" system requiring him to submit to frequent urine tests which, if omitted or failed, would then lead to confinement in either center or jail.

American society does not do these things for a number of reasons. One is that, despite popular talk, we do not really take the problem that seriously—or at least have not until white middle-class suburbanites began to suffer from a problem only ghetto blacks once endured. Another is that we think that detaining addicts for the mere fact of addiction is violative of their civil rights. (It is an interesting question. We quarantine people with smallpox without thinking that their rights are violated. The similarities as well as the differences are worth some public debate.) Finally, we do

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not do these things because *we labor under the misapprehension that law enforcement should concentrate on the "pushers" and the "big connections" and not on the innocent user.*

The last reason may be the weakest of all, even if among tough-sounding politicians it is the most common. In the first place, the "pusher" is largely a myth, or more accurately, he is simply the addict playing one of his roles. And the "big connections" and "top dealers," who indeed exist and who generally are not users, are in many ways the *least* important part of the heroin market system—because they are the most easily replaced. A new "connection" arises for every one put out of business. The amount of heroin seized by federal agents is only a fraction of what is imported.

This last fact has led many persons in and out of government to speak critically of the Administration's effort to eliminate the legal growing of opium poppies in Turkey. There is not much doubt that the present American heroin market could be supplied by alternative, and harder to control, poppy fields in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. One study suggests that the entire estimated American consumption of heroin would require fewer than 10 square miles of poppy fields! There may be compelling *political* reasons, however, for pressing the crop eradication program. It is hard to imagine a President launching a serious effort to constrain heroin users or heroin dealers if he were to ignore the foreign manufacture and importation of heroin. Indeed, he would run the risk of being accused not only of ignoring foreign producers, but perhaps even of actively helping them wage what some would no doubt call "chemical warfare" against America's ghetto poor. Some such criticisms are forthcoming even despite the crop eradication program: Witness the recent charge by a Yale scholar that the Central Intelligence Agency is assisting heroin traffickers in Southeast Asia.

But whatever politics may require, the key element in the heroin market will not be the poppy grower, the heroin smuggler, or the drug dealer. There are any number of alternative ways to perform each of these functions. The indispensable element is the heroin user. As William Burroughs wrote in *Naked Lunch*, "The addict in the street who must have junk to live is the one irreplaceable factor in the junk equation."

Containing the contagion

The novice or would-be heroin user is quite vulnerable to changes, even small ones, in the availability of heroin. For one thing, a person

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who has not yet become a heavy user will not conduct an intensive search for a supply. Some studies have suggested that a "dabbler" may use heroin if it is immediately available but not use it if it requires two, three, or four hours of searching. Extending the search time for novices may discourage their use of heroin, or reduce the frequency of their use. In addition, a dealer in heroin is reluctant to sell to persons with whom he is not closely acquainted for fear of detection and apprehension by the police. When police surveillance is intensified, the dealer becomes more cautious about those with whom he does business. A casual user or distant acquaintance represents a threat to the dealer when police activity is high; when such activity is low, the casual or new customer is more attractive. Heroin customers can be thought of as a "queue" with the heaviest users at the head of the line and the casual ones at the end; how far down the queue the dealer will do business depends on the perceived level of risk associated with each additional customer, and that in turn depends on how strongly "the heat is on."

The price of heroin to the user will be affected by law enforcement in different ways, depending on the focus of the pressure. No one, of course, has the data with which to construct anything but a highly conjectural model of the heroin market; at the same time, we believe there is little reason for asserting that the *only* effect of law enforcement on the heroin market is to drive up the price of the product.

Enforcement aimed at the sources of supply may well drive up the price. The price of a "bag" on the street has risen steeply since the early 1950's and simultaneously the quality of the product has declined (which means that the real price increase is even higher than the nominal one). This was the result of a vast increase in demand (the heroin "epidemic" of the 1950's and 1960's) coupled with the increase in risks associated with dealing in the product. So the long-term effect of law-enforcement pressures on dealers is probably to force up the price of heroin by either increasing the cash price, decreasing the quality of the product, or requiring dealers to discriminate among their customers in order to avoid risky sales. But in the short term, anti-dealer law enforcement probably affects access (finding a "connection") more than price.

Suppose instead that law enforcement were directed at the *user* rather than the dealer. Taking users off the streets in large numbers would tend to reduce the demand for, and thus the price of, heroin. Furthermore, with many heavy customers gone, some dealers would have to accept the risks of doing business with novice users who,

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having smaller habits or indeed no real habits at all, would consume per capita fewer bags and pay lower prices. (Law enforcement aimed merely at known and regular users would not, however, result in the apprehension of many novice users and thus would not take off the streets a large fraction of the sources of heroin "infection.") Suppose, finally, that coupled with law enforcement aimed at known users there were a selective strategy of identifying and restraining the agents of contagion. This was tried in Chicago on an experimental basis by Hughes and Crawford, with promising though not conclusive results. On spotting a neighborhood epidemic, they intervened by seeking quickly to identify the friends and fellow users of an addict. They found in this case that one addict led them to 14 other addicts and, most important, to seven persons experimenting with heroin. The doctors were able to involve 11 of the 14 addicts and five of the seven experimenters in a treatment program; the remainder of the experimenters apparently discontinued heroin use, perhaps because the social structure in which their drug use took place was disrupted.

There is, of course, an alternative way to get many confirmed addicts out of the heroin black market, and that is to offer them heroin legally at nominal prices. A black market would still exist for novice users, unregistered regular users, and registered regular users who wished to supplement their government-supplied maintenance dose with an additional dose that would produce a "high." Furthermore, this black market would be in many ways more attractive to the euphoria-seeking user because, due to competition from government suppliers, prices in it would be lower than the price in the existing market. And under this system, the government-maintained users would remain on the street and some fraction of them would continue to serve as contagion agents, thus causing the size of the addict population to continue to grow. Whether it would grow as fast as it has in the past, no one can say. There is little evidence of any rapid growth in England, but as pointed out above, this may be due to the fact that British addicts are different from American ones and that the illegal supply of heroin is much smaller there than it is here. Indeed, any estimate of the future size of the addict population under any set of legal constraints is almost meaningless. We simply do not know how many persons are susceptible to heroin use if exposed to it and what fraction of the population that is at risk is now using heroin. It is possible that even if nothing is changed, the rate of increase will slow down or even stop, because the potential market has been saturated.

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Methadone maintenance

Methadone is an addictive synthetic opiate that has become the basis of the single most important heroin treatment program in the United States. Though methadone itself is addictive (after regular use, withdrawal produces pain), it has advantages over heroin: It may be taken orally; it produces no "high" if used orally; in large doses it "blocks" the euphoric effect of heroin and prevents the craving for heroin; these effects last for about 24 hours (as opposed to about six hours for heroin); and it has no significant harmful side effects. If methadone is injected (as is often the case in Britain), it can produce a "high" and a risk of a harmful overdose. And if taken orally in *small* dosages, methadone will not block the high that results from injecting heroin, though it may continue to suppress the craving for heroin. Because it will produce a "high" when injected, a black market in methadone has developed and some deaths from overdosage have been reported.

There are a number of controversies about the proper use of methadone and indeed about the ethics of using it at all. Doctors disagree over whether the addict should get the large "blockage" dose or only the small "anti-craving" dose, over whether the methadone patient should be required to accept various ancillary services (psychiatric help, job counselling, etc.), and over whether efforts can or should be made to withdraw the patient from methadone. Others argue over the morality of feeding an addiction and, inevitably, running the risk of addicting some persons who were not addicted when they entered the program. For this reason, most methadone clinics screen candidates carefully to insure that only confirmed heroin users are admitted; this means that young persons tend to be excluded.

The evaluations that have been made so far of methadone generally term it a success. By "success" is meant that the patients tend to stay in the program, that those who stay in the program tend to become employable, and that those who stay in the program do not return to the regular use of heroin (though some may experiment with it from time to time). The evidence as to whether persons on methadone abstain from criminality is not as clear. Dr. Frances Gearing of Columbia University, who headed the largest evaluation program, found that the number of arrests and incarcerations of persons who entered a methadone program fell dramatically. A study in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, on the other hand, found some evidence that many successful methadone patients remain employed in criminal occupations (shoplifters, prostitutes,

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etc.), not only because that is the only trade they know, but also because, once they are freed of the need for heroin, that trade becomes even more profitable than before.

The central problem with methadone maintenance, however, is beyond dispute. So long as it remains a voluntary program, methadone is only attractive to those addicts who are tired of the life style of the addict, who no longer cherish the heroin "high" to the exclusion of all else, and who are otherwise "burned out." It is for this reason that the average methadone patient is between 30 and 35 years of age, while the average heroin addict is much younger. The typical methadone patient has been a heroin addict for 10 to 15 years and, as James V. DeLong has put it in his excellent summary of treatment programs, now finds methadone a more attractive choice than heroin. This means that the number of addicts who can be helped by a voluntary methadone program may be no more than one third or one half of the total addict population. And most important, it means that voluntary methadone maintenance holds little attraction for the kind of addict who is a contagion agent—young, excited by the heroin "high," and eager to convert his "straight" friends to its use.

Other forms of chemical treatment may be developed for heroin addiction. "Antagonists"—drugs that prevent subsequently-injected opiates from having any effect and that produce painful withdrawal symptoms in persons who have previously injected heroin—exist, but either have undesirable side effects or are not long-acting. Furthermore, since they do not produce a "high," and in addition do not reduce the craving for heroin, relatively few addicts are likely to volunteer for their use.

Possible policy directions

If nothing else, this discussion of the complexities of heroin use, marketing, and control should suggest the futility of arguments between the so-called "punitive" and "medical" approaches to addiction, the simplistic nature of unqualified recommendations that we adopt the "British system," and the imprecision of angry disputes between those who wish to "get tough" on "pushers" and those who wish to "decriminalize" heroin.

Beyond that, thinking about heroin requires one first of all to decide how one will handle the underlying philosophical issue—namely, whether the state is ever justified in protecting people from themselves, or whether it can only intervene to protect an innocent

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party from the actions of someone else. Put another way, the question is whether the state has any responsibility for the quality of human life in those cases where that quality (or lack of it) appears to be the result of freely exercised choice with no external effects on other parties. It is our view that the state does have such responsibilities, though its powers in this regard must be carefully exercised toward only the most important and reasonable goals. Even John Stuart Mill, whose defense of personal liberty is virtually absolute, argued against allowing a man to sell himself into slavery, "for by selling himself as a slave, he abdicates his liberty; he foregoes any future use of it beyond that simple act."

The next question is whether heroin addiction is such a form of "slavery" or is otherwise a state of being which should not be left to free choice. This is a more difficult question to answer in general terms, for somewhat surprisingly, we know rather little about what proportion of all heroin users are seriously incapacitated (or "captured") by it. Obviously, a large number are; but some might remain heavy users and yet hold jobs, lead responsible family lives, and retain other attributes of their humanity. Nobody knows what fraction are in this category, though we do know that the advocates of decriminalization tend to give (with little or no evidence) very generous estimates of it while proponents of "stamping out" heroin give very small ones. The lives of British addicts have not been carefully studied. But Griffith Edwards of the Addiction Research Institute reports "the impression of many of the clinic doctors" that "the majority of young heroin takers do not settle to a job, or otherwise manage their lives responsibly, do not keep to the prescribed dose, and tend to acquire drugs other than those prescribed." Furthermore, the mortality rate of British addicts, even without the need to steal to support a habit, is *28 times as large* as the death rate for the equivalent age group in the British population and *twice* that of American heroin addicts.

We think it clear that for a sufficiently large number of persons, heroin is so destructive of the human personality that it should not be made generally available. (Defending that view in the context of the current debate is not essential, however, because not even the most zealous advocate of decriminalization supports complete legalization.) We believe this to be the case, though we recognize the rejoinders that can be made. Alcohol, some will say, has consequences for many individuals and for society at least as destructive as those of heroin, yet no one would propose returning to a system of prohibition. Alcohol and heroin are different problems, however,

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both medically and legally. A far smaller proportion of alcohol users than of heroin users become addicted in any meaningful sense of that term; the risks to the average individual of experimentation are accordingly far less in the former than in the latter case. And of those "addicted" to alcohol, there have been a larger proportion of "cures," though not as many as one would wish. Finally, alcohol use is so widespread as to be nearly universal, while heroin use remains an exotic habit of relatively few, and thus presents easier problems of control. Perhaps because of this, while no advanced society has been able to eliminate alcohol use, *virtually every society but ours* has been able to eliminate, or keep to trifling proportions, heroin use.

If one accepts the view that it is desirable and possible, not only to provide better treatment for present addicts, but to reduce the rate of growth of the addict population, then one must also accept the need for some measure of compulsion; for nothing is clearer than the fact that most young addicts enjoying their "run" will not voluntarily choose a life without heroin in preference to a life with it. Such compulsion will be necessary whatever disposition is made of the constrained addict—whether he be put on probation or sent to prison, to a quarantine center, to a methadone program, or to a heroin maintenance program. The compulsion will be necessary to achieve two objectives: to insure that he remains in the appropriate treatment without "cheating" (i.e., simply using the treatment center as a cheap source of drugs to be sold on the street) and to insure that while treated he does not proselytize among non-addicts and spread the contagion. Furthermore, there is some evidence (inconclusive, to be sure) that the possibility of arrest followed by some penalty deters at least some potential users and makes access to heroin more difficult for others.

Finally, to the extent that people voluntarily elect not to use heroin, the fact of its illegality may contribute to the belief that such use is "wrong" and therefore enhance the probability that a non-user will remain a non-user. Or put another way, it is difficult to see how society can assert that heroin use is a grave evil if it also must admit that its use is perfectly legal.

Heroin maintenance

A detailed consideration of the legal policies which might most effectively deal with the heroin problem is beyond the scope of this article. In general, there are two alternatives—"out-patient" programs (in which the addict is left in the community but under a legally en-

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forced requirement to report periodically for tests and for chemical or other forms of treatment) and "in-patient" programs (in which the addict is separated from the community in detoxification, methadone, or other programs). Each kind of program must deal with both regular addicts and infectious, novice addicts. The legal, medical, and organizational issues involved in these alternatives are complex. The important thing, however, is to begin to consider them seriously—which means in turn to stop thinking of "legal" and "medical" approaches as mutually exclusive or separately viable.

Perhaps the most difficult of these issues is to decide what role heroin maintenance itself can play in an overall addict control program. It seems likely that offering low-cost, high-quality heroin is the one positive inducement that will prove attractive to most young addicts still enjoying their "run." Under the British system, the addict who obtains heroin from clinics is under no other obligations; no doctor or government official has the power to compel (and some doctors do not even have the desire to ask) an addict to accept, as a condition of heroin maintenance, any form of therapy, including the gradual substitution of oral methadone for heroin. In the British context, with a tiny addict population composed of persons apparently quite different from the typical American addict, that policy may work well enough, though experience with it is still too short to permit one to be confident of its value.

We would like to know more about the consequences of a carefully controlled heroin maintenance program such as the one proposed by the Vera Institute in New York City. If the federal government approves, heroin would be available to a small number of persons who have failed on methadone, but only on condition that they undergo various treatment programs and gradually shift off heroin.

But whatever the success of a small experiment, it seems likely that any larger program will involve real risks of sustaining the habits of contagion agents likely to recruit new addicts, and of supplying, through illegal diversions, the existing black market in drugs. With the best will in the world, it is probably impossible to devise a government program run by ordinary mortals that can provide heroin to a hundred or two hundred thousand addicts on an outpatient basis in a way that will avoid subsidizing the growth of the addict pool and supplying debilitating (as opposed to mere maintenance) doses. If that is true, and if our society believes that it has some responsibility for preventing addiction, then a substantial measure of legal compulsion will have to accompany any treatment program, *especially* one involving heroin maintenance.

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On meritocracy and equality

DANIEL BELL

In 1958, the English sociologist Michael Young wrote a fable, *The Rise of the Meritocracy.* It purports to be a "manuscript," written in the year 2033, which breaks off inconclusively for reasons the "narrator" failed to comprehend. The theme is the transformation of English society, by the turn of the 21st century, owing to the victory of the principle of achievement over that of ascription (i.e., the gaining of place by assignment or inheritance). For centuries, the elite positions in the society had been held by the children of the nobility on the hereditary principle of succession. But in the nature of modern society, "the rate of social progress depend[ed] on the degree to which power is matched with intelligence." Britain could no longer afford a ruling class without the necessary technical skills. Through the successive school-reform acts, the principle of merit slowly became established. Each man had his place in the society on the basis of "I.Q. and Effort." By 1990 or thereabouts, all adults with an I.Q. over 125 belonged to the meritocracy.

But with that transformation came an unexpected reaction. Previously, talent had been distributed throughout the society, and each class or social group had its own natural leaders. Now all men of talent were raised into a common elite, and those below had no ex-

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cuses for their failures; they bore the stigma of rejection, they were known inferiors.

By the year 2034 the Populists had revolted. Though the majority of the rebels were members of the lower classes, their leaders were high-status women, often the wives of leading scientists. Relegated during the early married years to the household because of the need to nurture high-I.Q. children, the activist women had demanded equality between the sexes—a movement that was then generalized into the demand for equality for all, and a classless society. Life was not to be ruled by "a mathematical measure," but each person would develop his own diverse capacities for leading his own life.[1] The Populists won. After little more than half a century, the Meritocracy had come to an end.

Is this, too, the fate of the post-industrial society? The post-industrial society, in its logic, is a meritocracy. Differential status and differential income are based on technical skills and higher education, and few high places are open to those without such qualifications. To that extent, the post-industrial society differs from society at the turn of the 20th century. The initial change, of course, came in the professions. Seventy years or so ago, one could still "read" law in a lawyer's office and take the bar examination without a college degree. Today, in medicine, law, accounting, and a dozen other professions, one needs a college degree and accrediting, through examination, by legally sanctioned committees of the profession before one can practice one's art. For many years, until after World War II, business was the chief route open to an ambitious and aggressive person who wanted to strike out for himself. And the rags-to-riches ascent (or, more accurately, clerk-to-capitalist, if one follows the career of a Rockefeller, Harriman, or Carnegie) required drive and ruthlessness rather than education and skills. One can still start various kinds of small businesses (usually, now, by franchise from a larger corporation), but the expansion of such enterprises takes vastly different skills than in the past. Within the corporation, as managerial positions have become professionalized, individuals are rarely promoted from below but are chosen from the outside, with a college degree as the passport. Only in politics, where position may be achieved through the ability to recruit a following or through

[1] A theoretician of the Technicians Party, Professor Eagle, had argued that marriage partners, in the national interest, should consult the intelligence register, for a high-I.Q. man who mates with a low-I.Q. woman is wasting his genes. The activist women, on the other hand, took romance as their banner and beauty as their flag, arguing that marriage should be based on attraction. Their favorite slogan was, "Beauty is achievable by all."

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patronage, is the mobility ladder relatively open to those without formal credentials.

Technical skill, in the post-industrial society, is what economists call "human capital." An "investment" in four years of college, according to initial estimates of Gary Becker, yields, over the average working life of the male graduate, an annual return of about 13 per cent. Graduation from an elite college (or elite law or business school) gives one a further advantage over graduates from "mass" or state schools. Thus the university, which once merely reflected the status system of the society, has now become the arbiter of class position. As the gatekeeper, it has gained a quasi-monopoly in determining the future stratification of the society.

Any institution which gains a quasi-monopoly power over the fate of individuals is likely, in a free society, to be subject to quick attack. Thus the Populist revolt which Michael Young foresaw several decades hence has already begun, at the very onset of the post-industrial society. One sees this today in the derogation of the I.Q. and the denunciation of theories espousing a genetic basis of intelligence; in the demand for "open admissions" to universities; in the pressure for increased numbers of blacks, women, and specific minority groups such as Puerto Ricans and Chicanos on the faculties of universities, by quotas if necessary; and in the attack on "credentials" and even schooling itself as the determinant of a man's position in society. A post-industrial society reshapes the class structure of society by creating new technical elites. The populist reaction, which has begun in the 1970's, raises the demand for greater "equality" as a defense against being excluded from that society. Thus the issue of meritocracy versus equality.

Genetics and intelligence

In a meritocracy as it has traditionally been conceived, the assessment of individuals and the allocation of social rewards proceed on the assumption of a close relation between achievement and intelligence and between intelligence and its measurement on the Intelligence Quotient scale. The first question to be asked about meritocracy, therefore, is what determines intelligence. In the received opinion of social science and biology, the number of talented persons in a society, as measured by I.Q., is a limited pool; and this is reflected in the bell-shaped curve of a normal distribution of test scores in a particular age category. By the logic of a meritocracy, these high-scoring individuals, no matter where they are in the

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society, should be brought to the top in order to make the best use of their talents.[2] This is the basis of the liberal theory of equality of opportunity and of Jefferson's belief in the "natural *aristoi*," as against an ascriptive nobility.

In these circumstances, the question of the relation of intelligence to genetic inheritance becomes very touchy. Is intelligence largely inherited? Can one raise intelligence by nurture? How does one separate native ability and drive from improvements in skill acquired through education? The average I.Q. of college graduates is 120, while that of high-school graduates is only 107. As Fritz Machlup has commented, "The greater earning capacity of college graduates, compared with high-school graduates, is, no doubt, to a large extent the result of superior native intelligence and greater ambition; it would be quite wrong to attribute all of the incremental earnings to the investment in college education."

The logic of the argument has been pushed further by the Harvard psychologist Richard Herrnstein. Using data assembled by Arthur Jensen of Berkeley—that 80 per cent of a person's I.Q. is inherited, while environmental factors account for only 20 per cent—Herrnstein then proceeds to extend the implication:

1. If differences in mental abilities are inherited, and
2. if success in society requires those abilities, and
3. if the environment is "equalized,"
4. then social standing will be based to a great extent on inherited differences.

Herrnstein's argument mixes up two different ideas: the assertion that in American society today occupational position *is* largely a function of I.Q., and the model of a meritocracy, whose stratification system *would be* determined by I.Q. Herrnstein concludes that if all persons are given an equal start, and equality of opportunity is fully realized, then heredity will become the decisive factor, since the social environment would be the same for all. And he draws a dismal picture of the new poor:

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[2]As Michael Young describes the rationale in his fable: "The proportion of people with I.Q.s over 130 could not be raised—the task was rather to prevent a fall—but the proportion of such people in work which called upon their full capacities was steadily raised. . . . Civilization does not depend upon the stolid mass, the *homme moyen sensuel*, but upon the creative minority, the innovator who with one stroke can save the labour of 10,000, the brilliant few who cannot look without wonder, the restless elite who have made mutation a social, as well as a biological, fact. The ranks of the scientists and technologists, the artists and the teachers, have been swelled, their education shaped to their high genetic destiny, their power for good increased. Progress is their triumph; the modern world their monument."

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> . . . There will be precipitated out of the mass of humanity, a low-capacity (intellectual or otherwise) residue that may be unable to master the common occupations, cannot compete for success and achievement and are most likely to be born to parents who have similarly failed.

The relation of genetics to intelligence to social-class position raises five different kinds of disputed questions: first, whether one can ever fix with any exactness the proportions of genetic inheritance and environment to intelligence (this is possible only if one assumes they are *causally* independent, i.e., that biological endowment does not influence the environment—which seems highly unlikely); second, what I.Q. tests actually measure—only particular skills or some more general underlying intelligence; third, whether I.Q. tests are "culture-bound," including even the self-styled "culture-fair" tests, which do not deal with school-taught knowledge but ask the child to deduce relations and correlates within simple non-representational drawings; fourth, whether the social class of the parent is more important than I.Q., in determining entry into college or occupational position in the society; finally, whether these relationships—between intelligence, social class background, and other factors—have changed over time at all, and whether the society *is* becoming more meritocractic.[3]

The parties to these disputes—particularly the school reformers—tend to mix up two very different issues: one, whether our society—because of social class privilege or cultural advantage (e.g., biased I.Q. tests)—actually provides genuine equal opportunity, or a fair start for all; and two, whether a society in which genuine equality of opportunity did prevail, and a new form of income and status in-

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[3]For a powerful argument, that society is not becoming more meritocratic, see Christopher Jencks and associates, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America.* (Basic Books, 1972).

Jencks argues that there is no evidence that (a) the correlation between education and occupational status has changed over the past 80 years; (b) the correlation between I.Q. and occupational status has changed over the past 50 years; (c) the correlation between education and income has changed over the past 30 years; (d) or that the correlation between I.Q. and income has changed.

Equally, says Jencks, there is no evidence for a decline in the effects of family background either on occupational status or income, at least since World War I. The work of Stephan Thernstrom suggests mobility rates as high in the 19th century as in the 20th.

"In what sense, then," writes Jencks, "can we say that society is becoming more meritocratic, if the importance of family background and educational credentials is constant over time?" Why should we accept Herrnstein's thesis if (a) education is no more important, and (b) he offers not a shred of evidence that I.Q. is more important than it used to be, and (c) all the indirect evidence suggests no change in the importance of I.Q. as against other factors in determining success." (Private communication, July 25, 1972.)

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equality based on merit did result, would be desirable. In other words, is it a more genuine equality of opportunity that is wanted, or an equality of result? It is the shuttling from one to another of these positions that has marked the populist argument in recent years and created a confusion in the political demands raised in its wake.

The credentials society

Initially, equality of opportunity was the main preoccupation. The explicit fear created by a post-industrial society is that failure to get on the educational escalator means exclusion from the privileged places in society. A meritocratic society is a "credentials society" in which certification of achievement—through the college degree, the professional examination, the license—becomes a condition of higher employment. Education thus becomes a defensive necessity, as Lester Thurow has observed (in *The Public Interest*, No. 28, Summer 1972):

> As the supply of educated labor increases, individuals find that they must improve their educational level simply to defend their current income positions. If they don't, others will and they will find their current jobs no longer open to them. Education becomes a good investment not because it would raise people's incomes above what they would have been if no one had increased his education, but rather because it raises their income above what it will be if others acquire an education and they do not. *In effect, education becomes a defensive expenditure necessary to protect one's "market share."* The larger the class of educated labor and the more rapidly it grows, the more such defensive expenditures become imperative.

The logical outcome of these fears is a demand on the part of disadvantaged groups for "open admissions" to universities. The underlying rationale of this demand has been the argument that social class origin of the parent was the primary factor skewing selection in the occupational system, and that open admissions to colleges would enable minority groups to compete more fairly in the society. To that extent, open admissions is no more than the historic American principle that everyone should have a chance to better himself, no matter where he starts. It is also the optimistic American belief that giving *any* student more education will do him good. This was the logic behind the land-grant college acts; it was the long-standing practice of the public universities, outside the East, even before World War II.[4]

[4]But there was usually some kind of sorting device. In the Midwestern systems,

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But for some the extension of this demand has become an attack on the meritocratic principle itself. As one proponent of open admissions, Jerome Karabel writes:

> As long as open admissions remains limited to a few institutions, it poses no threat to the meritocracy. Recruitment into the elite will be based not on *whether* one went to college, but on *where* one went to college. Universal open admissions, however, would destroy the close articulation between the meritocracy and the system of higher education; further, by the very act of abolishing hierarchy in admissions, it would cast doubt on hierarchy in the larger society.

That argument, however, if pushed to its logical conclusion, would mean that admission to all higher schools in the country, from Parsons College to Harvard, should be by lot. And the further conclusion, since elite schools would still be defined by the faculty, would be to make teaching assignments in the national university system a matter of lot as well.

Opening admissions is a means of widening equality of opportunity by broadening access to the university for potential students. But there is also the question of place in the university structure itself—in the faculty, staff, and administration. In their comprehensive study of the American occupational structure, Peter Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan have shown that almost all the different minority groups have been able to achieve commensurate status, power, and economic rewards—with the exception of women and blacks. Clearly, if there is discrimination—on the basis of sex, or color, or religion, or any criterion extraneous to professional qualification—there is no genuine equality of opportunity. The second effort to widen equality has been the effort to expand the number of places for minorities in the system.

In the 1960's, the government declared it a matter of public policy that "affirmative action" had to be taken to rectify the discrimination against minorities. The policy of affirmative action was first proclaimed by President Johnson in an Executive Order in 1965. It stated that on all federal projects, or in any employment situation that used federal money, employers had to prove they had sought out qualified applicants from disadvantaged groups; had to provide

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anyone with a C average or better in high school could enter the state university, but a ruthless examination system would weed out the poorer students by the end of the first or second year. In the California system, any high school graduate could go on to higher education, but a grade tracking system put the top 10 to 15 per cent directly into the universities (e.g., Berkeley, U.C.L.A.), the next 25 per cent into the state colleges, and the remainder into junior or community colleges.

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special training where necessary, if qualified applicants could not be found immediately; and had to hire preferentially from among minority-group members when their qualifications were roughly equal to those of other applicants. This program, combined with others such as Head Start and compensatory education programs, was designed to redress a historic cultural disadvantage and, quite deliberately, to give minority-group members, especially blacks, an edge in the competition for place.

In the first years of the affirmative action program, efforts were directed primarily within the skilled trades—especially the building trades, where there had been a deliberate policy of racial exclusion. In the early 1970's, the Nixon Administration, acting through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), extended the program to universities, and each school with federal contracts was asked to provide data on the number of minority persons in each position, academic and non-academic, and to set specific goals for increasing the number of minority-group persons in each classification. Edward Shils summarized the order as follows:

> Universities were informed that for each category of employee in the university it would be necessary to specify rates of remuneration and number in each category by "racial breakdown, i.e., Negro, Oriental, American Indian, Spanish-surnamed Americans. . . ." This had to be accompanied by an " 'Affirmative Action Program' which specifically and succinctly identif[ies] problem areas by division, department location and job classification, and includes more specific recommendations and plans for overcoming them." The "Affirmative Action Program" must "include specific goals and objectives by division, department and job classification, including target completion dates on both long and short ranges as the particular case may indicate. Analytical provision should be made for evaluating recruitment methods and sources; the total number of candidates interviewed, job offers made, the numbers hired with the number of minority group persons interviewed, made job offers, and hired. . . ."

From discrimination to representation

The initial intention of the Executive Order was to eliminate *discrimination*. But discrimination is difficult to prove, especially when the qualifications required for a job are highly specific. And the government's test became: Are the members of the minority groups to be found in employment, at every level, in numbers equal to their proportion in the population? Or, if women earned 30 per cent of the Ph.D.s, are 30 per cent of the faculty women? What this meant, in theory, was to set "*target*" figures for women and blacks. In practice,

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this has meant quotas, or priorities in hiring, for persons from these groups.

What is extraordinary about this change is that, without public debate, an entirely new principle of rights has been introduced into the polity. In the nature of the practice, *the principle has changed from discrimination to "representation."* Women, blacks, and Chicanos now are to be employed, as a matter of right, in proportion to their number, and the principle of professional qualification or individual achievement is subordinated to the new ascriptive principle of corporate identity.[5]

The implications of this new principle are far-reaching. One can "logically" insist on quotas where the skill is homogeneous, where one person can readily substitute for another. But by focusing on group identity rather than the person, by making the mechanical equation of number of women Ph.D.s to number of positions they should hold, the government assumes that "educated labor" is "homogeneous"—that individual talent or achievement is less important than the possession of the credential. This may be true in many occupations, but not in university teaching and research, where individual merit is the singular test. Putting someone in a tenure position, which is capitalized at three quarters of a million dollars, is very different from hiring a black rather than a white plumber; simply having the degree is not necessarily the qualification for the high position.

Furthermore, quotas and preferential hiring mean that standards are bent or broken. The inescapable assumption of the ascriptive criterion as regards tenured university positions is that minority persons are less qualified and could not compete with others, even if given a sufficient margin. What effect does this have on the self-esteem of a person hired on "second-class" grounds? And what effect does it have on the quality of a university, its teaching and research and morale, if its faculties are filled on the basis of quotas?

And quite apart from their effects, the quotas themselves are no simple matter. If "representation" is to be the criterion of position,

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[5]In full acknowledgment of this principle, the Union Theological Seminary on June 1 voted that blacks and other minority groups would henceforth make up one third and women one half of all students, faculty, staff, and directors. (At the time, blacks made up six per cent of the 566 students and eight per cent of the 38 faculty members; women 20 per cent of the student body and eight per cent of the faculty.) "It is unrealistic" said the Seminary, "to educate people in a pluralistic society in an environment that is overwhelmingly white and male-oriented." The figure of 50 per cent women was chosen to reflect their representation in society; the one third figure for minorities as a "critical mass" to give them presence. *New York Times*, June 1, 1972.

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then what is the logic of extending the principle only to women, Blacks, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, Filipinos, Chinese, and Japanese (the categories in the HEW guideline)? Why not to Irish, Italians, Poles, and other ethnic groups? And if representation is the criterion, what is the base of representation? At one California state college, as John Bunzel reports, the Mexican-Americans asked that 20 per cent of the total work force be Chicanos, because the surrounding community is 20 per cent Mexican-American. The black students rejected this argument and said that the proper base should be the state of California, which would provide a different mix of blacks and Chicanos. Would the University of Mississippi be expected to hire 37 per cent black faculty because that is the proportion of blacks in the population of Mississippi? And would the number of Jews in most faculties in the country be reduced because the Jews are clearly overrepresented in proportion to their number?

And if ethnic and minority tests, why not religion or political beliefs as the criteria of balanced representation? Governor Reagan of California has said that conservatives are highly underrepresented in the faculties of the state universities, a fact evident when the political coloration of those faculties is compared with voting results in California; should conservatives therefore be given preference in hiring? And should particular communities be asked to support the teaching of certain subjects (or the presence of certain books in school libraries) which are repugnant to the beliefs of that community—a question first raised in the Virginia House of Burgesses and a principle restated by the Tennessee legislature in the 1920's in barring the teaching of evolution in a Fundamentalist state?

The historic irony in the demand for representation on the basis of an ascriptive principle is its complete reversal of radical and humanist values. *The liberal and radical attack on discrimination was based on its denial of a justly earned place to a person on the basis of an unjust group attribute.* That person was judged—and excluded—because he was a member of a particular group. But now it is being demanded that one must have a place primarily because one possesses a particular group attribute. The person himself has disappeared. Only attributes remain. The further irony in all this is that according to the radical critique of contemporary society, an individual is treated not as a person but as a multiple of roles that divide and fragment him and reduce him to a single dominant attribute of the major role or function he plays in society. Yet in the reversal of principle we now find that a person is to be given preference by virtue of a role, his group membership, and the person is once again

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"reduced" to a single overriding attribute as the prerequisite for a place in the society. That is the logic of the demand for quotas.

II

The issues of schooling, of income, of status have all become matters of social policy because equality has been one of the central values of the American polity. But there has never been a clear-cut meaning to equality, and the earliest form of the idea in the 17th century was quite different from the popular form it assumed by the third decade of the 19th century. Those who founded the colonies—in New England, at least, beginning with the Pilgrims of the Mayflower Compact—had an image of themselves as a "community of virtuous men who understood themselves to be under sacred restraints." There was an equality, but in the Puritan sense of an equality of the elect. Among the Founding Fathers the idea of virtue and of election by ability (if no longer by grace) predominated. A curious blend of Roman republican imagery and Lockean thinking—since both emphasized agrarian virtues and labor—informed their language. The central theme was independence, and the conditions whereby a man could be independent. But in the very use of Lockean language there was an implicit commitment to a hierarchy—the hierarchy of intellect. Since thought was prized, it was assumed that some men "thought" better than others, were more able, more intelligent—and so formed the natural aristocracy.

The initial departure from this was symbolized by the "Jacksonian persuasion." Thought was replaced by sentiment and feeling, each man's sentiments were held to be as good as any other's. This is what gives point to the striking observations of Tocqueville. The opening lines of *Democracy in America* are:

> No novelty in the United States struck me more vividly during my stay than the equality of conditions. It was easy to see the immense influence of this basic fact on the whole course of society. It gives a particular turn to public opinion and a particular twist to the laws, new maxims to those who govern and particular habits to the governed.

Reflecting on the power of this new principle, Tocqueville concluded:

> Therefore the gradual progress of equality is something fated. The main features of this progress are the following: it is universal and permanent, it is daily passing beyond human control, and every event and every man helps it along. Is it wise to suppose that a movement which has been so long in train could be halted by one generation? Does any-

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> one imagine that democracy, which has destroyed the feudal system and vanquished kings, will fall back before the middle classes and the rich? Will it stop now, when it has grown so strong and its adversaries so weak?

In 19th-century America, however, the notion of equality was never sharply defined. In its voiced assertions it came down to the sentiment that each man was as good as another and no man was better than anyone else. What it meant, in effect, was that no one should take on the air of an aristocrat and lord it over other men. To this extent, it was a negative reaction to the highly mannered society of Europe, and travelers to this country at the time understood it in those terms. On its positive side, equality meant the chance to get ahead, regardless of one's origins; that no formal barriers or prescribed positions stood in one's way. It was this combination of attributes—the lack of deference and the emphasis on personal achievement—which gave 19th-century America its revolutionary appeal, so much so that when the German '48ers came here, including such members of Marx's Socialist Workers Club as Kriege and Willich, they abandoned socialism and became republicans.

The redefinition of equality

What is at stake today is the redefinition of equality. A principle which was the weapon for changing a vast social system, the principle of equality of opportunity, is now seen as leading to a new hierarchy, and the current demand is that the "just precedence" of society, in Locke's phrase, requires the reduction of all inequality, or the creation of *equality of result*—in income, status, and power—for all men in society. This issue is the central value problem of the post-industrial society.

The principle of equality of opportunity derives from a fundamental tenet of classic liberalism: that the individual—and not the family, the community, or the state—is the basic unit of society, and that the purpose of societal arrangements is to allow the individual the freedom to fulfill his own purposes—by his labor to gain property, by exchange to satisfy his wants, by upward mobility to achieve a place commensurate with his talents. It was assumed that individuals will differ—in their natural endowments, in their energy, drive, and motivation, in their conception of what is desirable—and that the institutions of society should establish procedures for regulating fairly the competition and exchanges necessary to fulfill these diverse desires and competences.

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As a principle, equality of opportunity denies the precedence of birth, of nepotism, of patronage or any other criterion which allocates place, other than fair competition open equally to talent and ambition. It asserts, in the terms of Talcott Parsons, universalism over particularism, achievement over ascription. It is an ideal derived directly from the Enlightenment as codified by Kant, the principle of individual merit generalized as a categorical imperative.

The social structure of modern society—in its bourgeois form as the universalism of money, in its romantic form as the thrust of ambition, in its intellectual form as the priority of knowledge—is based on this principle. Estate society, in the 18th century and earlier, had given honorific precedence to land, the Army, and the Church, and only the birthright of inheritance could provide access to these institutions. Even where there was nominal mobility—the institutions of the Red and the Black—commissions in the Army (as in England up to the middle of the 19th century) were only by purchase, and benefices in the Church were available through family connection. Modernity meant the uprooting of this stratified order by the principle of openness, change, and social mobility. The capitalist and the entrepreneur replaced the landed gentry, the government administrator took power over the Army, and the intellectual succeeded the priest. And, in principle, these new positions were open to all men of talent. Thus there occurred a complete social revolution: a change in the social base of status and power, and a new mode of access to place and privilege in the society.

The post-industrial society adds a new criterion to the definitions of base and access: Technical skill becomes a condition of operative power, and higher education the means of obtaining technical skill. As a result, there is a shift in the distribution of power as, in key institutions, technical competence becomes the overriding consideration. In industry, family capitalism is replaced by managerial capitalism; in government, patronage is replaced by civil service and bureaucratization; in the universities, the exclusiveness of the old social elites, particularly WASP domination of the Ivy League colleges, breaks up with the inclusion of ethnic groups, particularly the Jews. Increasingly, the newer professional occupations, particularly engineering and economics, become central to the decisions of the society. The post-industrial society, in this dimension of its status and power, is the logical extension of the meritocracy; it is the codification of a new social order based, in principle, on the priority of educated talent.

In social fact, the meritocracy is thus the displacement of one

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principle of stratification by another, of ascription by achievement. In the past this new principle was considered just. Men were to be judged and rewarded on the basis not of birth or primordial ties but of individual merit. Today that principle is held to be the new source of inequality and of social, if not psychological, injustice.

The case against meritocracy

The sociological and philosophical objections to the meritocracy are of a contradictory and overlapping nature:

1) If one assumes that a meritocracy is purely a selection by intelligence, and that intelligence is based on inherited genetic differences, then privilege is obtained on the basis of an arbitrary genetic lottery, which is the antithesis of social justice.

2) There can never be a pure meritocracy because high-status parents will invariably seek to pass on their positions, either through the use of influence or simply by the cultural advantages their children inevitably possess. Thus after one generation a meritocracy simply becomes an enclaved class.

3) There is considerable social mobility in the United States, but it is less related to schooling or ability or even family background than to intangible and random factors such as luck and competence in the particular job one falls into. Christopher Jencks and his associates, in a review of the effect of family and schooling on mobility, conclude:

> Poverty is not primarily hereditary. While children born into poverty have a higher than average chance of ending up poor, there is still an enormous amount of economic mobility from one generation to the next. There is nearly as much economic inequality among brothers raised in the same homes as in the general population. . . .
> . . . there is as almost as much economic inequality among those who score high on standardized tests as in the general population. Equalizing everyone's reading scores would not appreciably reduce the number of economic "failures." . . .
>
> Our work suggests, then, that many popular explanations of economic inequality are largely wrong. We cannot blame economic inequality primarily on genetic differences in men's capacity for abstract reasoning, since there is nearly as much economic inequality among men with equal test scores as among men in general. We cannot blame economic inequality primarily on the fact that parents pass along their disadvantages to their children, since there is nearly as much inequality among men whose parents hold the same economic status as among men in general. We cannot blame economic inequality on differences between schools, since differences between schools seem to have very little effect on any measurable attribute of those who attend them. Eco-

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> nomic success seems to depend on varieties of luck and on-the-job competence that are only moderately related to family background, schooling, or scores on standardized tests.

Thus, a situation of inequality exists which is justified on the basis of achievement or meritocracy but does not actually derive from them, so that the rewards of mobility, or, at least, the degrees of inequality in reward, are not justified.

4) A meritocracy instills a competitive feeling into society which is damaging to those who succeed and even more so to those who fail. Jerome Karabel writes:

> A meritocracy is more competitive than an overtly-based class society, and this unrelenting competition exacts a toll both from the losers, whose self-esteem is damaged, and from the winners, who may be more self-righteous about their elite status than is a more traditional ruling group. Apart from increased efficiency, it is doubtful whether a frenetically competitive inegalitarian society is much of an improvement over an ascriptive society which, at least, does not compel its poor people to internalize their failure.

5) The principle of equality of opportunity, even if fully realized on the basis of talent, simply recreates inequality anew in each generation, and thus becomes a conservative force in society. In its most vulgar form, this is the argument that equality of opportunity has been the means by which some (e.g., the Jews) have sought to get "theirs" in society and to deny latecomers (e.g., blacks) a fair share of the spoils. This is the argument employed in New York City, for example, where it is charged that in the school system Jews "used" the merit system to dispossess the Catholics, who had risen through patronage, but that the merit system now is a means of keeping out blacks from high places in the system. In its pristine form, this argument says social justice should mean equality not at the start of a race, but at the finish, equality not of opportunity but of result.

The Coleman Report

This change in social temper—the distrust of meritocracy—occurred principally in the last decade. The Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, as a double consequence of the civil rights revolution and the emphasis on higher education as a gateway to better place in the society, had made equality the central theme of social policy. The focus, however, was almost completely on widening equality of opportunity, principally through the schools: on compensatory education, Head Start programs, manpower training to

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improve skills, school integration, busing ghetto children to suburban schools, open admissions, and the like. It was clear that black and poor children were culturally disadvantaged, and these handicaps had to be eliminated. The image that President Johnson used, in proclaiming the policy of affirmative action, was that of a shackled runner:

> Imagine a hundred yard dash in which one of the two runners has his legs shackled together. He has progressed 10 yards, while the unshackled runner has gone 50 yards. At that point the judges decide that the race is unfair. How do they rectify the situation? Do they merely remove the shackles and allow the race to proceed? Then they could say that "equal opportunity" now prevailed. But one of the runners would still be forty yards ahead of the other. Would it not be the better part of justice to allow the previously shackled runner to make up the forty yard gap; or to start the race all over again? That would be affirmative action towards equality.

The change in attitude, however, began with the realization that schooling had little effect in raising the achievement or reducing the disparate standing of black children relative to white. In 1966, Professor James Coleman of Johns Hopkins University, carrying out a mandate of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, concluded a massive survey of 4,000 schools and 600,000 students. The Office of Education, which sponsored the research, and Coleman himself had expected to find gross inequality of educational resources between black and white schools and to use these findings as an argument for large-scale federal spending to redress the balance. But the report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, found that there was little difference between black and white schools in such things as physical facilities, formal curricula, and other measurable criteria; it also found that a significant gap in achievement scores between black and white children was already present in the first grade, and that despite the rough comparability of black and white schools, the gap between the two groups had widened by the end of elementary school. The only consistent variable explaining the differences in scores *within* each racial or ethnic group was the educational and economic attainment of the parents. As Coleman wrote:

> First, within each racial group, the strong relation of family economic and educational background to achievement does not diminish over the period of the school, and may even increase over the elementary years. Second, *most of the variation in student achievement lies within the same school, very little of it is between schools.* The implication of these last two results is clear: family background differences account for much more variation in achievement than do school differences.

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But there was no consistent variable to explain the difference *between* racial groups, not even family background—which is why some persons have fallen back on genetic explanations.

The Coleman findings dismayed the educational bureaucracy, and at first, received little attention. Issued in July 1966, the document was not reported in *The New York Times* or the newsweeklies. But as the explosive findings gradually became known, the Coleman Report became the center of the most extensive discussion of social policy in the history of American sociological debate, and the source of vehement public recrimination on such questions as compulsory integration, school busing, and the like.[6]

Much of the controversy over the Coleman Report dealt with integration: Some interpreted it, as did Coleman himself, in part, as a mandate to mix lower-class black schoolchildren with middle-class whites to provide stronger peer-group pressures for achievement; black-power advocates saw it as justification for black control of black schools in order to strengthen the black child's control over his own destiny; and still others felt that additional money spent on schools would be a waste, since schools were ineffective in reducing the achievement gaps between the races or between social classes.

But in the long run, the more important aspect of the report was less its findings than its major thesis, which was the redefinition of equality of opportunity. Coleman had been explicitly charged to determine the extent of inequality in the educational *resources* avail-

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[6]The first discussion of the report was in *The Public Interest,* No. 4 (Summer 1966), where Coleman summarized his conclusions in an article entitled "Equal Schools or Equal Students." As the debate widened, Coleman discussed the implications of the Report in *The Public Interest,* No. 9 (Fall 1967), in the article "Toward Open Schools." He argued for the utility of integration on the following grounds:

> The finding is that students do better when they are in schools where their fellow students come from backgrounds strong in educational motivation and resources. The results might be paraphrased by the statement that the educational resources provided by a child's fellow students are more important for his achievement than are the resources provided by the school board. This effect appears to be particularly great for students who themselves come from educationally-deprived backgrounds. For example, it is about twice as great for Negroes as for whites.

But since family background is so important, Coleman warned that "the task of increasing achievement of lower-class children cannot be fully implemented by school integration, even if integration were wholly achieved—and the magnitude of racial and class concentrations in large cities indicates that it is not likely to be achieved soon."

The most comprehensive discussion of the Coleman Report took place in a three-year seminar at Harvard University initiated by Daniel P. Moynihan. The various papers analyzing the report, and Coleman's reply to his critics, are in *On Equality of Educational Opportunity,* edited by Frederick Mosteller and Daniel P. Moynihan (New York, 1972).

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able to black and white children, the assumption being that social policy had to equalize the "inputs" into the educational process. But what Coleman took as his criterion was achievement, or results. In effect, he redefined equality of opportunity *from equal access to equally well-endowed schools (inputs) to equal performance on standardized achievement tests (equality of outcomes).* As he put it in the title of his *Public Interest* essay, the focus had to shift from "equal schools to equal students."

What Coleman was saying was that the public schools—or the process of education itself—were not the social equalizers American society imagined them to be. Children achieved more or less in relation to family background and social class, and these were the variables that would have to be changed. Equality would not be attained until an average public school in Harlem produced as many high achievers as one in Scarsdale.

Equality of result

The argument has been pushed one step further by Christopher Jencks. If the focus was on the "equal student," then the problem was not even the distinction between Harlem and Scarsdale. In reanalyzing the Coleman data, Jencks found that students who performed best on achievement tests "were often enrolled in the same schools as the students who performed worst," and this, he declared, was potentially the most revolutionary revelation in the Report: "In the short run it remains true that our most pressing political problem is the achievement gap between Harlem and Scarsdale. But in the long run it seems that our primary problem is not the disparity between Harlem and Scarsdale but the disparity between the top and bottom of the class in both Harlem and Scarsdale."

One can carry this still another step to the disparity among children of the same family. And Jencks in fact has done so: "There is nearly as much economic inequality among brothers raised in the same homes as in the general population. This means that inequality is recreated anew in each generation, even among people who start life in essentially identical circumstances." For Jencks, inequality is not inherited. There is no single consistent variable which explains who gets ahead and why. It is as much luck as anything else.

The logic of this argument is developed by Jencks in his book, *Inequality.* Not only can one not equalize opportunity, but even if one could, equalizing opportunity does not appreciably reduce the inequality in results. He concludes quite bluntly:

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> Instead of trying to reduce people's capacity to gain a competitive advantage on one another, we will have to change the rules of the game so as to reduce the rewards of competitive success and the costs of failure. Instead of trying to make everybody equally lucky or equally good at his job, we will have to devise "insurance" systems which neutralize the effects of luck, and income sharing systems which break the link between vocational success and living standards.[7]

The aim of social policy, thus, has to be equality of result—by sharing and redistributive policies—rather than equality of opportunity.

If equality of result is to be the main object of social policy—and it is the heart of the populist reaction against meritocracy—it will demand an entirely new political agenda for the social systems of advanced industrial countries. But no such political demand can ultimately succeed without being rooted in some powerful ethical system, and for this reason the concept of equality of result has become the Archimedean point of a major new effort to provide a philosophical foundation—a conception of justice as fairness—for a communal society.

In the nature of human consciousness, a scheme of moral equity is the necessary basis for any social order; for legitimacy to exist, power must be justified. In the end, it is moral ideas—the conception of

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[7]Jencks' key argument, to repeat, is that "economic success seems to depend on varieties of luck and on-the-job competence that are only moderately related to family background, schooling or scores on standardized tests." And, as he concludes, "Nobody seems able to say exactly what 'competence' in this sense entails, including employers who pay huge sums for it, but it does not seem to be at all similar from one job to another. This makes it harder to imagine a strategy for equalizing such competence. A strategy for equalizing luck is even harder to conceive."

Since the factors which make for success are, for Jencks, simply wayward, there is no ethical justification for large disparities in income and status; and since one cannot equalize luck in order to create equal opportunity, one should seek to equalize results.

While Jencks' findings are important against the vulgar Marxist notion that inheritance of social class background is all-important in determining the place of the child, and they disprove, once again, the stilted American myth that each person of ability finds a place commensurate with his merit, the inability to find a consistent set of relationships leads Jencks to emphasize "luck" as a major factor. But in his analysis, "luck" is really only a *residual factor* which is inserted because all other variables do not correlate highly. In and of itself, luck cannot be measured as a positive variable. While it may be true, as many studies show, that there is a low correlation between the career one thinks a man is educating himself for and the final outcomes, and that there is a measure of "luck" about the job one finds in relation to one's talents to fulfill the job, the fact remains, nevertheless, that on the job, particularly at the professional level, there is a high degree of talent and hard work required to succeed. By emphasizing "luck" Jencks seeks to use the randomness of an occupational roulette wheel to minimize the *earned* quality of success and to justify policies which "equalize result." And it may be that there is much more luck to the occupational system than Marxists or Meritocrats would like to admit. Yet "common observation" (that other residual category of analysis) would indicate that—

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what is desirable—that shape history through human aspirations. Western liberal society was "designed" by Locke, Adam Smith, and Bentham on the premise of individual freedom and the satisfaction of private utilities; these were the axioms whose consequences were to be realized through the market and later through the democratic political system. But that doctrine is crumbling, and the political system is now being geared to the realization not of individual ends but of group and communal ends. Socialism has had political appeal for a century now not so much because of its moral depiction of what the future society would be like, as because of material disparities within disadvantaged classes, the hatred of bourgeois society by many intellectuals, and the eschatological vision of a "cunning" of History. But the normative ethic was only implicit; it was never spelled out or justified. The claim for equality of result is a socialist ethic (as equality of opportunity is the liberal ethic), and as a moral basis for society it can finally succeed in obtaining men's allegiance not by material reward but by philosophical justification. An effort in politics has to be confirmed in philosophy. And an attempt to provide that confirmation is now under way.

III

The starting point for the renewed discussion of inequality—as for so much of modern politics—is Rousseau. In his *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men* (the "Second Discourse"), Rousseau sought to show that civil society ineluctably generates inequality. For Rousseau, the state of nature was a psychological construct that showed what men would be like without society. In nature and in society, there are two kinds of dependence. As he wrote in *Emile,* there is "dependence on things, which is the work of nature; and dependence on men, which is the work of society. Dependence on things, being non-moral, does no injury to liberty and begets no vices; dependence on men, being out of order, gives rise to every kind of vice, and through this master and slave become mutually depraved." The movement from nature to society is a change in the character of dependence.

For Rousseau, there are also two kinds of inequality: One is natural or physical (such as age, health, strength); the other, moral

again, on the professional level at least—hard work is a necessary condition for success, and that if a rough equality of opportunity has allowed one man to go further than another, he has *earned* the unequal reward—income, status, authority—which goes with that success. The important question of justice—as I argue later—is really "how much" unequal reward, in what dimensions, and for what.

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or political inequality, is based on convention and established by the consent of men. Inevitably, however, as society developed, the first led to the second:

> Each one began to look at the others and to want to be looked at himself, and public esteem had a value. The one who sang or danced the best, the handsomest, the strongest, the most adroit or the most eloquent became the most highly considered; and this was the first step toward inequality and, at the same time, toward vice.

Since mind, beauty, strength, skill, merit, and talent established the rank and fate of men, it was necessary to have these qualities, or to dissemble:

> . . . for one's advantage, it was necessary to appear to be other than what one in fact was. To be and to seem to be become two altogether different things; and from this distinction came conspicuous ostentation, deceptive cunning, and all the vices that follow from them. . . . Finally, consuming ambition, the fervor to raise one's relative fortune less out of true need than in order to place oneself above others, inspires in all men a base inclination to harm each other, a secret jealousy all the more dangerous because, in order to strike its blow in greater safety, it often assumes the mask of benevolence. . . .

Vanity thus was one source of inequality. The other was material differences rooted in property. Property in and of itself is good and productive. Labor gives a person the right to the soil, and continuous possession is transformed into property, thus establishing "the first rules of justice." Things in this state "could have remained equal if talents had been equal . . . but this proportion was soon broken; the stronger did more work; the clever turned his to better advantage; the more ingenious found ways to shorten his labor." And one man thus had more than another.

> Thus, does natural inequality imperceptibly manifest itself along with contrived inequality; and thus do the differences among men, developed by those circumstances, become more perceptible, more permanent in their effects, and begin to have a proportionate influence over the fate of individuals . . . Thus, as the most powerful or most miserable made of their force or their needs a sort of right to the goods of others, equivalent to them to the right of property, the destruction of equality was followed by the most frightful disorder. . . .

Inequalities of various kinds become formalized, "but in general, wealth, nobility or rank, power and personal merit [are] the principal distinctions by which one is measured in society." Of these four types of inequality,

> as personal qualities are the origin of all the others, wealth is the last

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> to which they are reduced in the end because, being the most immediately useful to well-being and the easiest to communicate, it is easily used to buy all the rest: an observation which can permit a rather exact judgment of the extent to which each people is removed from its primitive institution, and the distance it has traveled toward the extreme limit of corruption.

Thus, "from the extreme inequality of conditions and fortunes . . . come scores of prejudices equally contrary to reason, happiness and virtue." This is what one finds "in discovering and following . . . the forgotten and lost routes that must have led man from the natural state to the civil state."

Since man cannot live in the state of nature, the problem is how to reduce the dependence of man upon man and yet make him a social person instead of a natural person. Rousseau's answer, of course, is the social contract, the tie by which men forswear both natural liberty and conventional liberty to gain moral liberty. One renounces one's self—one's vanity and the desire to dominate others—by becoming a member of the community; and the community itself is a single personality, a whole of which each citizen is a part.

> These clauses [of the social contract], rightly understood, are reducible to one only, viz. the total alienation to the whole community of each associate with all his rights; for, in the first place, since each gives himself up entirely, the conditions are equal for all; and the conditions being equal for all, no one has any interest in making them burdensome to others.

The price of equality, then, is that "an individual can no longer claim anything"; he has no individual rights, "his person and his whole power" are dissolved into the general will. Equality is possible only in community through the eclipse of the self. Thus Rousseau pursued one logic of the meaning of equality.

Mill and the logic of representation

For Rousseau, who sees social nature as ruled by passion and vice, equality is not an end in itself but a means of achieving civic virtue and making virtuous men; in his hierarchy of purposes, he retains the classical view of the goals of society. For a second, more diffuse kind of political thought, the purpose of equality is social peace, and its guiding principle is utility.

Democracy is by nature contentious because men constantly covet what other men have. Not all societies invite invidious comparisons. The peasant did not compare his lot with the lord; he had his al-

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lotted place in the scheme of things and accepted it fatalistically. Democracy, with its normative commitment to equality, inevitably provides an evaluative yardstick for measuring discrepancies in status, wealth, and power. Where one is barred from modifying these discrepancies, the result is often—in Nietzsche's term—*ressentiment,* or envy, anger, and hatred toward those at the top. As Max Scheler has noted:

> *Ressentiment* must therefore be strongest in a society like ours, where approximately equal rights (political and otherwise) or formal social equality, publicly recognized, go hand in hand with wide factual differences in power, property and education. . . . Quite independently of the characters and experiences of individuals, a potent charge of *ressentiment* is here accumulated by the very structure of society.[8]

Ressentiment is the chief psychological fuel of disruption and conflict, and the problem for the society is how to reduce it. Since inequality is not random but patterned—the discrepancies are grouped—all groups have to be included in the society and enabled to use the political system as a means of redressing other forms of inequality. Thus, the chief instrument of social peace is representation.

The rationale for this system was laid down by John Stuart Mill in his *Representative Government.* "The interest of the excluded is always in danger of being overlooked," he wrote. The group he had in mind, at the time, was the working class. Although the other classes no longer "deliberately" sought to sacrifice the interests of the working class to themselves, the very fact that the workers were excluded meant that questions were never regarded from their viewpoint. Mill went so far as to argue that representative government can only exist when there is proportional representation, and one chapter of his book, entitled "Representation of Minorities," explores the Hare system for this kind of election, "a scheme which has the almost unparalleled merit of carrying out a great principle of gov-

[8]Compare Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*: "One must not blind himself to the fact that democratic institutions most successfully develop sentiments of envy in the human heart. This is not because they provide the means for everybody to rise to the level of everybody else but because these means are constantly proving inadequate in the hands of those using them. Democratic institutions awaken and flatter the passion for equality without ever being able to satisfy it entirely. This complete equality is always slipping through the people's fingers at the moment when they think to grasp it, fleeing, as Pascal says, in an eternal flight; the people grow heated in search of this blessing, all the more precious because it is near enough to be seen but too far off to be tasted. They are excited by the chance and irritated by the uncertainty of success; the excitement is followed by weariness and then by bitterness. In that state anything which in any way transcends the people seems an obstacle to their desires, and they are tired by the sight of any superiority, however legitimate."

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ernment in a manner approaching to ideal perfection as regards the special object in view. . . ." What is good about that principle of government is that "it secures a representation, in proportion to numbers, of every division of the electoral body: not two great parties alone, with perhaps a few large sectional minorities in particular places, but every minority in the whole nation, consisting of a sufficiently large number to be, on principles of equal justice, entitled to a representative."

The logic of minority representation is the quota. Any polity, to obey the dictates of equal justice, would have to insist that its representative body be made up of social units equal in proportion to the diverse composition of its membership. The Democratic Party, in its new rules for the 1972 convention, did exactly this in stipulating that all state parties had to take "affirmative steps" to make their delegations representative of their respective state populations in terms of minority groups, women, and young people (those from 18 to 30).

The problem of quotas

But this raises two serious problems. First, how does one define a legitimate "interest," or social unit, or minority corporate group? In the early years of the Republic, it was argued that the states were the legitimate units of representation, and the Constitution, before it was amended, gave state legislatures the duty of electing each state's two senators. In the 1930's and after, the legitimate units seemed to be the "functional groups"—business, farmers, and workers. In the 1960's and 1970's, the units came to be biologically defined (sex, color, age) and culturally defined (ethnic, religious) groups. Yet if one sits in a representative body on the basis of age, sex, ethnic group, religion, or occupation, is that single corporate identity to be the overriding attribute which guarantees one's place? It is an elementary sociological fact that a person has not a single identity but a multiple number of roles. Does a black woman under 30 have three votes rather than one? Or must she choose a single attribute to be "quotaed" for?

Second, if political bodies are composed entirely of corporate groups, what happens to numerical majority rule? Do the few larger corporate bodies outvote the smaller ones? The blacks, for example, one of the most disadvantaged groups in American society, make up about 11 per cent of the population. In a few cities they are a majority, but these cities do not have sufficient financial resources

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for rehabilitation or improvement. The sociologist Herbert Gans has argued that no numerical majority will ever tax itself, or redistribute its wealth, to aid a minority, so that in a majoritarian society the lot of the blacks will never be greatly improved. In consequence, he argues that if equality is to be achieved, minority groups should be given special veto rights in the society. This is, in effect, the principle of the "concurrent majority" which John C. Calhoun sought before the Civil War to protect the Southern states from being outvoted by the North.[9] It is also the logic behind the idea of "community control" over social resources such as schools, housing, and the like. But is there then any wider social or public interest? If corporate or community groups are to control the decisions which affect their lives, by what right can one deny a Southern community the right to practice segregation? And if a local group vetoes the passage of a highway through its neighborhood, does it not thus impose a higher tax cost on its neighbors by insisting on this relocation?

The purpose of inclusive representation of all minorities is to reduce conflict, yet the history of almost all societies shows that when polities polarize along a single overriding dimension—be it class, religion, language, tribe, or ethnic group—there is bound to be violent conflict; and when there are numerous "cross-cutting" identities—in Holland, where there are both class and religious political parties, Catholic and Protestant workers divide so that neither religion nor class wholly captures a single allegiance—there is a greater degree of checks and veto power in the society. In short, can the principle of quota representation in the polity, defined along communal or particularistic lines, escape either the polarization or the fragmentation of the polity, and the fate of ataxia for the society?

Rawls and fairness

If Rousseau sought equality of result for the sake of virtue, and Mill equal representation proportionate to one's interest for the purpose of social stability, John Rawls wants to establish the priority of equality for reasons of justice. As he elegantly declares, "justice

[9]Calhoun argued that agreement requires a consensus of all the major interests or factions, rather than a simple majority of people which cuts across such natural or social lines as regions, groups, or classes. This was a caricature, though a brilliant one, of the Madisonian model. It was a philosophical argument about representation in a heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous society, in order to sustain human inequality, white supremacy, states' rights, anti-majoritarianism, and minority power. It came, one should also note, at a time when American parties had begun to splinter.

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is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought."[10]

What is justice? It cannot be the greatest good for the greatest number, for the price of this may be injustice for the lesser number. It has to be a distributive principle for judging competing claims—i.e., the appropriate division of social advantages. For Rawls, this is justice as fairness, and the foundation of fairness rests, initially, on two principles:

> First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.
>
> Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.

The first principle deals with equal liberties of citizenship—freedom of speech, vote, and assembly; eligibility for office; and so on. The second deals with social and economic inequalities—the distribution of income and wealth, differences in the degree of authority, and the like. It is with the second principle that we are concerned. The controlling terms in the propositions are the ambiguous phrases "to everyone's advantage," and "equally open to all." What do they mean?

Rawls' argument is complex, yet lucid. "Equally open" can mean either equal in the sense that careers are open to the talented, or equal in the sense of "equality of fair opportunity." The first simply means that those who have the ability and the drive are entitled to the place they have earned; this is the conventional liberal position. But Rawls notes that it does not take account of the distortions arising out of social contingencies. "In all sectors of society," Rawls

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[10]John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard University Press, 1971). Justice, for Rawls, does not encapsulate all the energies of the society; it is a principle of distributive standards, and is itself part of a larger social ideal to which a society commits itself. He writes:

> A conception of social justice, then, is to be regarded as providing in the first instance a standard whereby the distributive aspects of the basic structure of society are to be assessed. This standard, however, is not to be confused with the principles defining the other virtues, for the basic structure, and social arrangements generally may be efficient or inefficient, liberal or illiberal, and many other things, as well as just or unjust. A complete conception defining principles for all the virtues of the basic structure, together with the respective weights when they conflict, is more than a conception of justice; it is a social ideal. The principles of justice are but a part, although perhaps the most important part of such a conception. A social ideal in turn is connected with a conception of society, a vision of the way in which the aims and purposes of social cooperation are to be understood. . . . Fully to understand a conception of justice we must make explicit the conception of social cooperation from which it derives.

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writes, "there should be roughly equal prospects of culture and achievement for everyone similarly motivated and endowed. . . . Chances to acquire cultural knowledge and skills should not depend upon one's class position, and so the school system, whether public or private, should be designed to even out class barriers."

The liberal principle accepts the elimination of social differences in order to assure an equal start, but it justifies *unequal result* on the basis of natural abilities and talents. For Rawls, however, "natural" advantages are as arbitrary or random as social ones.

> There is no more reason to permit the distribution of income and wealth to be settled by the distribution of natural assets than by historical and social fortune. . . . The extent to which natural capacities develop and reach fruition is affected by all kinds of social conditions and class attitudes. Even the willingness to make an effort, to try, and so to be deserving in the ordinary sense is itself dependent upon happy family and social circumstances. It is impossible in practice to secure equal chances of achievement and culture for those similarly endowed, and therefore we may want to adopt a principle which recognizes this fact and also mitigates the arbitrary effects of the natural lottery.

Therefore, Rawls concludes, one cannot equalize opportunity, one can only bend it towards another purpose—the equality of result.

> No one deserves his greater natural capacity nor merits a more favorable starting place in society. But it does not follow that one should eliminate these distinctions. There is another way to deal with them. The basic structure can be arranged so that these contingencies work for the good of the least fortunate. Thus we are led to the difference principle if we wish to set up the social system so that no one gains or loses from his arbitrary place in the distribution of natural assets or his initial position in society without giving or receiving compensating advantages in return.[11]

The question thus turns from "equally open to all," to the distribution of chances for place—the distribution of primary social goods or values—to the meaning of "everyone's advantage." This phrase, for Rawls, can be defined in terms of either the "principle of efficiency," or the "difference principle."

The efficiency principle is congruent with what welfare economists call "Pareto optimality." The allocation of goods or utilities is efficient when one reaches the point where it is impossible to change an existing distribution pattern so as to make some persons (even one) better off without at the same time making some other persons

[11]As Rawls further notes, "The naturally advantaged are not to gain merely because they are more gifted, but only to cover the costs of training and education and for using their endowments in ways that help the less fortunate as well."

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(at least one) worse off. For Rawls the difficulty with the principle of efficiency is that, as a matter of fairness, it cannot specify *who* is better off or who is not worse off. A utilitarian principle, "Pareto optimality" is interested only in a net social balance and is indifferent to actual individuals.

The "difference principle"

The "difference principle" states that if some persons are to be better off, the less advantaged are also to be better off, and in some circumstances even more so. If one gains, so must the others. "The intuitive idea is that the social order is not to establish and secure the more attractive prospects of those better off unless doing so is to the advantage of those less fortunate."[12]

This leads Rawls to his more general conception of social justice, or the social ideal:

> All social primary goods—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advantage of the least favored.

For this reason, too, Rawls rejects the idea of a meritocracy. Although the meritocratic idea *is* democratic, it violates the conception of fairness:

> The [meritocratic] social order follows the principle of careers open to talents and uses equality of opportunity as a way of releasing men's energies in the pursuit of economic prosperity and political domination. There exists a marked disparity between the upper and lower classes in both means of life and the rights and privileges of organizational authority. The culture of the poorer strata is impoverished while that of the governing and technocratic elite is securely based on the service of national ends of power and wealth. Equality of opportunity means an equal chance to leave the less fortunate behind in the per-

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[12]In an interesting comparison, Rawls (like Rousseau) takes the metaphor of the family as the model for this principle:

> The family in its ideal conception, and often in practice, is one place where the principle of maximizing the sum of advantages is rejected. Members of a family commonly do not wish to gain unless they can do so in ways that further the interests of the rest. Now wanting to act on the difference principle has precisely this consequence.

The difficulty with this argument—if one regards society as the family writ large—is that the family, as Freud has argued, holds together by love, which is specific. One loves one's wife and children—and tries to pass on one's advantages to them. Where love is generalized to the society, it becomes "aim-inhibited" (because one loves all) and is consequently weak and ineffective. For this reason, Freud argues in *Civilization and its Discontents* that communism is impossible in the larger society.

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sonal quest for influence and social position. Thus a meritocratic society is a danger for the other interpretations of the principles of justice but not the democratic conception. For, as we have just seen, the difference principle transforms the aims of society in fundamental respects.

The difference principle has two implications for social policy. One is the principle of redress for individuals:

> This is the principle that undeserved inequalities call for redress; and since the inequalities of birth and natural endowment are undeserved, these inequalities are to be somehow compensated for. Thus, the principle holds that in order to treat all persons equally, to provide genuine equality of opportunity, society must give more attention to those with fewer native assets and to those born into the less favorable social position. The idea is to redress the bias of contingencies in the direction of equality. In pursuit of this principle greater resources might be spent on the education of the less rather than the more intelligent, at least over a certain time of life, say the earlier years of school.

The second is the more general principle that talent is to be regarded as a social asset, and its fruits should be available to all, especially the less fortunate:

> [The difference principle] transforms the aims of the basic structure so that the total scheme of institutions no longer emphasizes social efficiency and technocratic values. We see then that the difference principle represents, in effect, an agreement to regard the distribution of natural talents as a common asset and to share in the benefits of this distribution whatever it turns out to be. Those who have been favored by nature, whoever they are, may gain from their good fortune only on terms that improve the situation of those who have lost out.

We have here a fundamental rationale for a major shift in values; instead of the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his ability," we have the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." And the justification for need is fairness to those who are disadvantaged for reasons beyond their control.

The end of liberalism

With Rawls, we have the most comprehensive effort in modern philosophy to justify a socialist ethic. In this redefinition of equality as equity, we can observe the development of a political philosophy which will go far to shape the last part of the 20th century, as the doctrines of Locke and Smith molded the 19th. The liberal theory of

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society was framed by the twin axes of individualism and rationality. The unencumbered individual would seek to realize his own satisfactions on the basis of his work—he was to be rewarded for effort, pluck, and risk—and the exchange of products with others was calculated by each so as to maximize his own satisfactions. Society was to make no judgments between men—only to set the procedural rules—and the most efficient distribution of resources was the one that produced the greatest net balance of satisfactions.

Today we have come to the end of classic liberalism. It is not individual satisfaction which is the measure of social good, but redress for the disadvantaged as a prior claim on the social conscience and on social policy.[13] Rawls' effort in *A Theory of Justice* is to establish the principle of fairness, but he pays little attention, other than using the generic term "disadvantaged," to *who* is to be helped.[14]. Yet in contemporary society, inevitably, the disadvantaged are identifiable largely in group terms, and the principle of equity is linked with the principle of quota representation.

The claim for group rights stands in formal contradiction to the principle of individualism, with its emphasis on achievement and universalism. But in reality it is no more than the extension to hitherto excluded social units of the group principle which has undergirded American politics from the start. The group process—which was the vaunted discovery of the "realists" of American political science—consisted largely of economic bargaining between functional or pressure groups operating outside the formal structure of

[13]The claims of the poor are, of course, among the oldest traditions in Western thought and are central to the idea of Christian love. But Christian love—charity as *caritas*—accepted the poor as worthy in themselves and loved the poor as poor without endowing them with higher qualities than they possessed. In that sense, classic Protestant liberalism—with its sympathy and humanitarianism, rather than love—corroded the social conscience of the Catholic world. From a different source, the romanticizing of the poor, a tradition going back to Villon, also led to the erosion of *caritas* toward the poor. For a defense of Christian love as the basis of society, and a biting attack on English moral philosophy (i.e. Hutcheson, Adam Smith, Hume), see Max Scheler's *Ressentiment*.

[14]It is striking that Rawls, like Jencks, does not discuss either "work" or "effort"—as if those who had succeeded, in the university, or in business or government, had done so largely by contingent circumstances of fortune or social background. There is a discussion of meritocracy, but not of merit. This itself is a measure of how far we have moved from 19th-century values.

It is equally striking that, in the "issue-attention cycle," the policy concern a decade ago was with "excellence." The Stern Fund sponsored a major study on the identification of excellence; John Gardner wrote a book about excellence. At that time, meritocracy was a positive word—so much so that Merrill Peterson, in his magisterial biography of Thomas Jefferson, said that Jefferson would have used the word "meritocracy" to define his "natural aristocracy" if he had known the term. Today the concern is almost entirely with equality and the disadvantaged. Will the "issue-attention cycle" come full circle in the future?

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the political system. What we now find are ethnic and ascriptive groups claiming formal representation both in the formal political structure and in all other institutions of the society.

These claims are legitimated, further, by the fact that America has been a pluralist society, or has come to accept the principle of pluralism rather than the homogeneity of Americanism. But pluralism, in its classic conceptions, made a claim for the cultural identity of ethnic and religious groups and for the institutional autonomy of cultural institutions (e.g., universities) from politics. Pluralism was based on the separation of realms. But what we have today is a thoroughgoing politicizing of society in which not only the market is subordinated to political decision but all institutions have to bend to the demands of a political center and politicize themselves. Here, too, there has been another change. In functional group politics, membership was not fixed, and one could find cross-cutting allegiances or shifting coalitions. Today the groups that claim representation—in the political parties, in the universities, in the hospitals, and in the community—are formed by primordial or biological ties; and one cannot erase the ascriptive nature of sex or color.

And yet, once one accepts the principle of redress and representation in the group terms that were initially formulated, it is difficult for the polity to deny those later claims. That is the logic of democracy which has always been present in the ambiguous legacy of the principle of equality.

IV

Any principle inevitably has its ambiguities, for no moral situation is ever clear-cut, particularly in the case of equal opportunity versus equal result, where the conflict is between right versus right, rather than right versus wrong. What, then, are the difficulties and the contradictions in the principle of fairness, and are they of sufficient weight to render it nugatory?

First, what is the meaning of disadvantage? What is the measure of fairness? Is it objective or subjective? Often a sense of unfairness depends upon expectation and the degree of deprivation. But by whose standard? One measure, Rawls writes,

> is a definition solely in terms of relative income and wealth with no reference to social position. Thus, all persons with less than half the median income and wealth may be taken as the least advantaged segment. This definition depends only upon the lower half of the distribution and has the merit of focusing attention on the social distance between those who have the least and the average citizen.

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The relativity of disadvantage

But for most persons the question of unfairness or deprivation is not some fixed or absolute standard but a comparison with relevant others. We know from many sociological studies that large disparities of income and status are accepted as fair if individuals feel that it is the will of God, or justly earned, while small differences, if arbitrary, will often seem unfair. Orderlies in a hospital compare their income with that of a nurse but not that of a doctor. Thus relative deprivation and reference group (to use the sociological jargon) at each point stipulate the degree of disparity. But are we to accept the subjective evaluations of individuals as the moral norm, or an objective standard, and on what basis? The point is not clear.

If disadvantage is difficult to define, there is a different kind of problem in the identification of "the least fortunate group." Rawls writes:

> Here it seems impossible to avoid a certain arbitrariness. One possibility is to choose a particular social position, say that of the unskilled worker, and then to count as the least advantaged all those with the average income and wealth of this group or less. The expectation of the lowest representative man is defined as the average taken over this whole class.[15]

Problems of borderlines and shadings apart—and in practical terms these are great—the identification of social position in this fashion raises a serious psychological question. One of the important considerations of moral philosophy has been to avoid the labelling, or public stigmatization, of the disadvantaged. This is one of the reasons why reformers have always fought a "means test" as the criterion for public aid and tried to provide help as a right. It is one of the reasons (administrative matters aside) why proposals for the redistribution of income have suggested that a stipulated sum be given to all persons, and that money above a certain level be recouped by taxation. Yet Rawls writes: ". . . we are entitled at some point to plead practical considerations in formulating the difference

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[15]What if the "least fortunate" are there by their own choice? Christopher Jencks points out that while "we have already eliminated virtually all economic and academic obstacles to earning a high school diploma . . . one student in five still drops out." And while one may guarantee working-class families the same educational opportunities as middle-class families, what happens if they don't want to use this opportunity? Society may have an obligation to those who are kept down or cannot advance because it is not their fault. But if individuals—for cultural or psychological reasons—do not avail themselves of opportunities, is it the society's responsibility, as the prior obligation, to devote resources to them? But if not, how does one distinguish between the genuinely disadvantaged and those who are not? This is the inextricable difficulty of social policy.

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principle. Sooner or later the capacity of philosophical or other arguments to make finer discriminations is bound to run out." But it is exactly at those points where principle has to be translated into rule and case that the problems of public policy and administration begin.

The question of labelling and redress leads back to a more general contradiction, the relation of equality to a principle of universalism. One of the historical gains of equality was the establishment of a principle of universalism, so that a rule—as in the rule of law—applied equally to all, and thus avoided administrative determination between persons. For example, in the Constitution, this meant the outlawing of bills of attainder, which are aimed at one person; a law has to be written with a sufficient degree of generality to cover all persons within a category. In criminal law, we apply *equal punishment* to those who have violated the same law, regardless of the ability to bear punishment, and two men convicted of speeding are fined $25 each though one is a millionaire and the other a pauper. The law does not inquire into their status differences; there is equal liability. And the court is enjoined from so prying in order to avoid the enlargement of judicial power which would enable the judge to make determinations between persons; his function is solely to find out whether they are guilty or not. Yet where wealth and income are concerned, we have in some areas gone far in the opposite direction.

Under the income-tax law, which was adopted in this century, not only do individuals not pay an equal amount (e.g., $500 each), they do not even pay equal proportions (e.g., 10 per cent each, which would lead to different absolute amounts on varying incomes). In principle, they pay progressively higher proportions as incomes rise. Here ability—the ability to pay—becomes the measure. It may well be that in the area of wealth and income one wants to establish the principle "from each according to his ability, to each in accordance with another's needs;" the principle of justice here applies because *marginal* amounts must be compared. (If two persons pay the same amount, in one case it comes to half his income, in the other case only a tenth, and the same principle is at work in proportionate taxes.) But, in the larger context, the wholesale adoption of the principle of fairness in all areas of life shifts the entire society from a principle of equal liability and universalism to one of unequal burden and administrative determination.

The ground of fairness is a generalized social norm founded on a social contract. It is based, Rawls says, on the theory of rational choice whereby individuals declare their own preferences, subject to

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the principle of redress and the principle of difference; and this rational choice would push the societal balance toward the social norm. Now, utility theory can order the preferences of an individual and define the rational conduct of the individual; and, in utility theory, society is rightly arranged when we have a net balance of individual gains or losses on the basis of the person's own preferences in free exchange. But here we run up against a difficulty. If rationality is the basis of the social norm, can we have a social-welfare function that amalgamates the discordant preferences of individuals into a combined choice which recapitulates the rationality of the individual choice? If one accepts the theoretical argument of the Arrow impossibility theorem—which shows that a rational combined choice is not possible—we cannot (observing the conditions of democracy and majority choice) have a social-welfare function.[16] What the social norm is to be then becomes a political question, subject to either consensus or to conflict—extortion by the most threatening, or collective bargaining in which people eventually accept some idea of trade-off. But if the decision is political, there are then no clear theoretical determinations, set by principles of rational choice of what the social norm should be—unless, in the Rousseauan sense, the body politic is a "single" personality. We may want a social norm for reasons of fairness, but in the structure of rational choice procedures we cannot define one.

If the definition of a social norm, then, is essentially a political one, the principle of helping the least fortunate as the *prior* social obliga-

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[16]Rawls avoids the difficulty of the Arrow impossibility theorem by rejecting the condition of majority rule. He writes:

> It is evident from the preceding remarks that the procedure of majority rule, however it is defined and circumscribed, has a subordinate place as a procedural device. The justification for it rests squarely on the political ends that the constitution is designed to achieve, and therefore on the two principles of justice. . . . A fundamental part of the majority principle is that the procedure should satisfy the conditions of background justice. . . . When this background is absent, the first principle of justice is not satisfied; yet even when it is present, there is no assurance that just legislation will be enacted.
>
> There is nothing to the view, then, that what the majority wills is right. . . . This question is one of political judgment and does not belong to the theory of justice. It suffices to note that while citizens normally submit their conduct to democratic authority, that is, recognize the outcome of a vote as establishing a binding rule, other things equal, they do not submit their judgment to it.

Rawls is right of course, as with most traditional conceptions of justice, that the action of a majority does not make any decision right. The tyranny of a majority has long been recognized as a source of injustice, as much as the tyranny of a despot. The procedural question, however, is whether, as a *consistent rule* there is a better method than majority vote, subject to the democratic check of a minority having the right and ability to change the decision and become a majority, in reaching consensus.

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tion may mean—in a sociological as well as statistical sense—a regression toward the mean. If it is assumed that we have reached a post-scarcity stage of full abundance, this may be a desirable social policy. But if this is not so—and it is questionable whether it can ever be so—and if one defines society, as Rawls does, "as a cooperative venture for mutual advantage," why not allow greater incentives for those who can expand the total social output and use this larger "social pie" for the mutual (yet differential) advantage of all?

It is quite striking that the one society in modern history which consciously began with a principle of almost complete equality (including almost no wage differentials)—the Soviet Union—gradually abandoned that policy, not because it was restoring capitalism but because it found that differential wages and privileges served as incentives and were also a more rational "rationing" of time. (If a manager's time is worth more than that of an unskilled worker, since he has to make decisions, should he be expected to wait in line for a crowded tram or be given a car of his own to get to work?) Even those societies which have had relatively small differentials in income and incentives in the post-World War II years, such as Israel and Yugoslavia, have gradually widened these differences in order to stimulate productivity. And one of the chief pieces of advice which sympathetic economists have given to Fidel Castro to restore his stumbling economy (which has been largely organized on the basis of moral exhortation and the donation of extra labor time) is to make greater use of material incentives and wage differentials. In the United States, the major period when social programs could be most easily financed was from 1960 to 1965, when the increase in the rate of economic growth, not the redistribution of income, provided a fiscal surplus for such programs.

The difficult and thorny question, in the end, is not just priority—who should be helped first—but the degree of disparity among persons. How much difference should there be in income between the head of a corporation and a common laborer, between a professor at the top of the scale and an instructor? The differences in pay in a business firm are on the order of 20:1, in a hospital of 10:1, and in a university of 5:1. What is the rationale for these differences? What is fair? Traditionally, the market was the arbiter of differential reward, based on scarcity or on demand. But as economic decisions become politicized, and as the market is replaced by social decisions, what is the principle of fair reward and fair differences? Clearly this will be one of the most vexing questions in a post-industrial society.

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A striking fact of Western society over the past 200 years has been the steady decrease in income disparity among persons—not by distribution policies and judgments about fairness, but by technology, which has cheapened the cost of products and made more things available to more people. The irony, of course, is that as disparities have decreased, as democracy has become more tangible, the expectations of equality have increased even faster. and people make more invidous comparisons ("people may suffer less but their sensibility is exacerbated"), a phenomenon now commonly known as the "Tocqueville effect." The revolution of rising expectations is also the revolution of rising *ressentiment.*

The real social problem, however, may be not the abstract question of "fairness" but the social character of *ressentiment,* and the conditions which give rise to it. The fascinating sociological puzzle is why in the democratic society, as inequality decreases, *ressentiment* increases. That, too, is part of the ambiguous legacy of democracy.

A just meritocracy

The difficulty with much of this discussion is that inequality has been considered as a unitary circumstance, and one single principle the measure of its redress, whereas in sociological fact there are different kinds of inequality. The problem is not *either/or* but what *kinds* of inequality lead to what *kinds* of social and moral differences. There are, we know, different kinds of inequality—differences in income and wealth, status, power, opportunity (occupational or social), education, services, and the like. There is not one scale but many, and the inequalities in one scale do not correlate perfectly with inequality in every other.[17]

We can, for example, insist on a basic social equality in that each person is to be given respect and not to be humiliated on the basis of color, or sexual proclivities, or other personal attributes. This is the

[17]Rawls writes: "One is not allowed to justify differences in income or organizational powers on the ground that the disadvantages of those in one position are outweighed by the greater advantages of those in another. Much less can infringements of liberty be counterbalanced in this way." His argument is puzzling. In any interdependent society one forgoes certain liberties—in traffic and zoning regulations—to enhance others. Nor is it clear why one has to redress inequalities in every sphere rather than allow individuals to choose which sphere represents the most nagging inequality to them. As a political principle, it is unlikely that any single rule can dominate a polity without disruption. In the *Politics,* Aristotle distinguished between two kinds of justice, numerical equality (equality of result) and equality based on merit. As he concluded: "To lay it down that equality shall be exclusively of one kind or another is a bad thing, as is shown by what happens in practice; no constitution lasts long that is constructed on such a basis."

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basis of the civil rights legislation outlawing modes of public humiliation such as Jim Crow laws, and setting forth the principle of complete equal access to all public places. This principle also makes sexual conduct a purely private matter between consenting adults.

We can reduce invidious distinctions in work, whereby some persons are paid by the piece or the hour and others receive a salary by the month or year, or a system whereby some persons receive a fluctuating wage on the basis of hours or weeks worked and others have a steady, calculable income. We can assert that each person is entitled to a basic set of services and income which provides him with adequate medical care, housing, and the like. These are matters of security and dignity which must necessarily be the prior concerns of a civilized society.

But one need not impose a rigid, dogmatic egalitarianism in matters where it conflicts with other social objectives and even becomes self-defeating. Thus, on the question of wage or salary differentials, there may be good market reasons for insisting that the wages of a physician and dentist be greater than those of a nurse or dental technician, for if each cost the patient roughly the same (if one could for the same price have the services of a better qualified person), no one would want to use a nurse or dental technician, even in small matters. The price system, in this case, is a mechanism for the efficient rationing of time. If as a result of differential wages the income spread between the occupations became exceedingly high, one could then use the tax laws to reduce the differences.

But the point is that these questions of inequality have little to do with the issue of meritocracy, if we define the meritocracy as those who have an *earned* status or have achieved positions of rational authority by competence. Contemporary populism, in its desire for wholesale egalitarianism, insists in the end on complete levelling. It is not *for fairness,* but *against elitism;* its impulse is not justice but *ressentiment.* What the populists resent is not power (which they seek for the undifferentiated mass) but authority—the authority represented in the superior competence of individuals. In the populist sociology, for example, the authority of doctors should be subject to the decisions of a community council, and that of professors to the entire collegiate body (which in the extreme versions includes the janitors).

But there cannot be complete democratization in the entire range of human activities. It makes no sense, in the arts, to insist on a democracy of judgment. Which painting, which piece of music,

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which novel or poem is better than another cannot be subject to popular vote—unless one assumes, as was to some extent evident in the "sensibility of the 1960's," that all art is reducible to experience and each person's experience is as meaningful to him as anyone else's. In science and scholarship achievement is measured and ranked on the basis of accomplishment—be it discovery, synthesis, acuity of criticism, comprehensive paradigms, statements of new relationships, and the like. And these are forms of intellectual authority.

Sociologists have made a distinction between power and authority. Power is the ability to command which is backed up, either implicitly or explicitly, by force. That is why power is the defining principle of politics. Authority is a competence based upon skill, learning, talent, artistry, or some similar attribute. Inevitably it leads to distinctions between those who are superior and those who are not. A meritocracy is made up of those who have earned their authority. An unjust meritocracy is one which makes these distinctions invidious and demeans those below.

Rawls has said that the most fundamental good of all is self-respect. But the English sociologist W. G. Runciman has made a useful distinction between respect and praise. While all men are entitled to respect, they are not all entitled to praise.[18] The meritocracy, in the best meaning of that word, is made up of those worthy of praise. They are the men who are best in their field, as judged by their peers.

And just as some individuals are worthy of praise, so are certain institutions—e.g., those engaged in the cultivation of achievement, the institutions of science and scholarship, culture and learning. The university is dedicated to the authority of scholarship and learning and to the transmission of knowledge from those who are competent to those who are capable. There is no reason why a university cannot be a meritocracy, without impairing the esteem of other institutions. There is every reason why a university has to be a meritocracy if the resources of the society—for research, for scholarship, for learning—are to be spent for "mutual advantage," and if a degree of culture is to prevail.

And there is no reason why the principle of meritocracy should not obtain in business and government as well. One wants entrepreneurs and innovators who can expand the amount of productive wealth for society. One wants men in political office who can

[18]W. G. Runciman, "'Social' Equality," *Philosophical Quarterly*, XVII (1967), reprinted in his *Sociology In Its Place* (London, 1970).

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govern well. The quality of life in any society is determined, in considerable measure, by the quality of leadership. A society that does not have its best men at the head of its leading institutions is a sociological and moral absurdity.

Nor is this in contradiction with the fairness principle. One can acknowledge, as I would, the priority of the disadvantaged (with all its difficulty of definition) as an axiom of social policy, without diminishing the opportunity for the best to rise to the top through work and effort. The principles of merit, achievement, and universalism are, it seems to me, the necessary foundations for a productive—and cultivated—society. What is important is that the society, to the fullest extent possible, be a genuinely open one.

The question of justice arises when those at the top can convert their authority positions into large, discrepant material and social advantages over others. The sociological problem, then, is how far this convertibility is possible. In every society, there are three fundamental realms of hierarchy—wealth, power, and status. In bourgeois society, wealth could buy power and deference. In aristocratic society, status could command power and wealth (through marriage). In military and estate societies, power could command wealth and status. Today it is uncertain whether the exact relations between the three any longer hold: Income and wealth (even when combined with corporate power) rarely command prestige (who knows the names or can recognize the faces of the heads of Standard Oil, American Telephone, or General Motors?); political office does not make a man wealthy; high status (and professors rank among the highest in prestige rankings) does not provide wealth or power. Nor does the existence of a meritocracy preclude the use of other routes—particularly politics—to high position and power in the society.

But even within the realms the differences are being tempered; and the politics of contemporary society makes this even more likely in the future. Wealth allows a few to enjoy what many cannot have; but this difference can—and will—be mitigated by a social minimum. Power (not authority) allows some men to exercise domination over others; but in the polity at large, and in most institutions, such unilateral power is increasingly checked. The most difficult of all disparities is the one of status, for what is at stake is the desire to be different and to *enjoy* the disparity. With his usual acuteness, Rousseau observed: "[It is] the universal desire for reputation, honors and preferences, which devours us all, trains and compares talents and strengths . . . stimulates and multiplies passions; and making

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all men competitors, rivals or rather enemies how many reverses, successes and catastrophes of all kinds it causes. . . ."

Yet, if vanity—or ego—can never be erased, one can still observe the equality of respect due to all and the differential degree of praise owed to some. As Runciman puts it, "a society in which all inequalities of prestige or esteem were inequalities of praise would to this extent be just." It is in this sense that we can acknowledge differences between individuals. It is to that extent that a well-tempered meritocracy can be a society not of equals, but of the just.

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Equalizing education: in whose benefit?

DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN

A series of recent state and federal court decisions, just now reaching the Supreme Court on appeal, have held that expenditure per pupil in public schools must be equal for all students in any given state, or nearly equal, or in any event not differing in amounts clearly associated with the differing per capita wealth of different school districts. The legal arguments behind these decisions have varied somewhat, but the primary thrust has been that of "equal protection of the laws," with much owing, in almost every case, to the arguments successfully presented to the California Supreme Court in the 1971 decision of *Serrano v. Priest.* These in turn derived in considerable measure from the 1970 study *Private Wealth and Public Education* by John E. Coons, William H. Clune, and Stephen D. Sugarman.

On first encounter, these cases conform to a familiar pattern of social reform in the present age, most notably in their use of the judicial process to bring about results that apparently cannot be obtained through the political process concerning matters theretofore deemed to be within the political realm. But these events also reveal another, more recent pattern, which has only just begun to take hold in the American polity. For the judicial actions are self-induced, or nearly so. Almost wherever one looks, government-paid lawyers are

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involved on behalf of the plaintiffs. There emerges an autogamous mode of government growth: big government ordering itself to become bigger.

These actions in the area of education are probably the first of a new class of cases that will now be argued in many fields. They raise important constitutional issues having to do with the extent to which the citizen is entitled as a matter of right to have the state do certain things for him. At issue too are questions of social power which the public has a right to expect will also be taken into account as these other matters go forward. The ancient query, "*Cui bono?*" may be invoked: To whose benefit do these decisions redound?

What we spend on education

The most striking aspect of educational expenditure is how large it has become. Those who wish to argue that it is still not large enough are free to do so, and may well be right; but no one can contend that schools have been slighted in the past decade. Legislatures—in the aggregate—have levied ever increasing amounts of money to pay for them. For the past 10 years the proportion of Gross National Product expended on elementary and secondary education has risen at a rate almost half again that of the GNP itself. This education expenditure has been rising 9.7 per cent annually, as against the 6.8 per cent increase in GNP. The total cost of elementary and secondary education has more than doubled in the past 10 years, as has expenditure per pupil. By the 1971-72 school year, current expenditure per pupil in "average daily attendance" had reached $929, and should now be near the $1000 mark. In constant dollars this is an expenditure about three to four times as great as that during the period when the average adult reader of this article went to school. In 1971-72, some $46.8 billion was expended by public schools.

There is nothing especially notable about these rates of growth; they correspond to a general surge in public expenditure in almost every sector save defense. Writing of the 10-year period now ending, Charles L. Schultze and his colleagues at the Brookings Institution report that "in the space of 10 short years, federal civilian expenditures as a percentage of GNP almost doubled." State and local budgets, from which the great proportion of elementary and secondary school expenditure comes, rose at similar rates.

A second fact about educational expenditure is that it varies considerably by area in fairly close approximation to the wealth of the areas involved. In 1970, California, the venue of the *Serrano* decision,

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had the eighth highest per capita income in the nation, and the sixth highest per pupil expenditure on education. In the school year 1969-70, the average per pupil expenditure in California was $922; Mississippi spent $476. As with many of the individual school districts to which the *Serrano* class of decisions is directed, the low expenditures for education in Mississippi reflect more the low level of aggregate wealth than any manifest unwillingness to tax. In Mississippi, 4.97 per cent of per capita personal income is spent on elementary and secondary education, which contrasts to a national average of 4.46 per cent. New York taxes at a somewhat lower rate than Mississippi, 4.92 per cent of per capita income; but this produces $1,237, almost three times the per pupil expenditure figure for Mississippi. A familiar situation.

Less familiar, but central to the thrust of these decisions, is the variation in school expenditure within states. Allowing for exceptions, a simple pattern seems to be typical throughout most of the country. Suburbs spend above the average, central cities at or slightly above the average, small towns and rural areas below the average. This is a long-standing situation. State aid programs in New York, for example, begin as a deliberate effort to "equalize" expenditure between the "rich" cities and the "poor" countryside. The wealth of New York City, as George Washington Plunkitt observed, was "pie for the hayseeds," and slice it they did; but never to the point of equality.[1]

A final fact, even less familiar (or more resisted), is that after a point school expenditure does not seem to have any notable influence on school achievement. To repeat, *after* a point. A school without a roof, or without books, or without teachers would probably not be a school in which a great deal of learning went on. But once expenditure rises above a certain zone, money doesn't seem to matter that much in terms of what happens to students. This "discovery" was one of the major events in large-scale social science during the 1960's (albeit one well anticipated in small-scale work), but it is of the first importance to understand that it was not unique. Something like the same thing has been "discovered" about a whole range of public services. In the main, the finding is that the influence of these mechanistic "interventions" (government programs) is distinct but limited, and often easily outdistanced by other influences of a more

[1]I write these lines in a one-room schoolhouse in Upstate New York which was not closed until the year I matriculated in a veritable palace of a high school newly opened in East Harlem under the patronage of Vito Marcantonio and Fiorello LaGuardia.

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organic nature (family, peer group, etc.). Although a fair amount of recrimination has attended these "findings," they ought not to cause any great grief to competent persons. Indeed, if one is concerned with the expanding power of the state, evidence that its influence soon reaches an end with respect to many fundamental matters is, on the whole, cheering. Moreover, while the differential effects of state intervention may be small, they may be no less crucial for that reason.

Will more money do any good?

In the hope of evading the rancor that surrounds this subject in the United States, recent data from a longitudinal study of British school children may be cited. Children born in 1958 were compared in terms of family size, social class ("I" being high; "V" low), sex, and region (England, Scotland, Wales). Here are the differences (as recounted in the journal *New Society*) children absorb from the air they breathe:

> The average difference in . . . test scores between, on the one hand, English boys in social class V who have four and more brothers and sisters, and on the other hand, Scottish girls in social class I who are only children, is equivalent to a gain in reading age of nearly four years.

If this is so, certain strategies come to mind. More youths might be shipped off to Scotland. A bonus might be paid for aborting fifth and sixth children. Mothers might be encouraged to have more girl babies. Income redistribution might help. Certain kinds of teaching might help. But on balance, one would not conclude from the British data that increasing educational expenditure could do much to close that gap of nearly four years.

A comparable judgment would have to be made of the American situation. There are considerable regional, class, racial, and ethnic variations in certain kinds of achievement. We would like to see them eliminated, even in the knowledge that this might nudge us yet further along toward Michael Young's dilemma. But it is simply not clear that school expenditure is the heart of the matter. In 1971, the Rand Corporation carried out for the President's Commission on School Finance a review and synthesis of research findings on the effectiveness of education. The result was thoroughly predictable, but nonetheless devastating to whatever is left of conventional wisdom in this field. Simply put, in the range of current educational practice, regarding levels of expenditure, types of teaching, and such, the researchers found that no *"variant of the existing system*

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. . . *is consistently related to students' educational outcomes.*"[2] Put another way, "*research has found nothing that consistently and unambiguously makes a difference in student outcomes.*" The report continues, "There is good reason to ask whether our educational problems are, in fact, school problems." And it concludes with two policy implications, each stated as gently as seemed possible:

> *Increasing expenditures on traditional educational practices is not likely to improve educational outcomes substantially.*
>
> *There seem to be opportunities for significant redirections and in some cases reductions in educational expenditures without deterioration in educational outcomes.*

A member of the President's Commission would have had to be dim indeed to fail to grasp that the Rand Corporation analysts were suggesting that with respect to school finance there is a strong possibility that we may already be spending too much.[3] This thought will offend some persons, including perhaps some who have no doubt whatever that the military is spending too much. But giving offense would seem to be the role of social science at this time. And there is worse. It is no great matter that the Scarsdale school system spends extra money and gets little extra in return. But the record of compensatory education, as reported by the Rand study, is wrenching. There is small consolation to be had in articles such as "How Regression Artifacts in Quasi-experimental Evaluation Can Mistakenly Make Compensatory Education Look Harmful," to cite from the bibliography but one effort to ease the pain of unwelcome findings. These are the facts we have to live with, and they do not at this time make any case for a general increase in educational expenditure.

Certainly, they make no case for a simple-minded mandate to impose equal expenditure on the existing system. One hastens to say that men such as John E. Coons, the prime intellectual mover behind the *Serrano* decision, have nothing of the sort in mind; and it may be that the courts are well aware of the many complexities of this subject. If so, however, the courts have not let us know this.

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[2]Harvey A. Averch, et al., *How Effective Is Schooling? A Critical Review and Synthesis of Research Findings.* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, January 1972) pp. xii, xiii. (All italics theirs.)

[3]Item: In 1966 Congress directed a nationwide program of driver education, at just that moment when it became unmistakable that no case could be made that driver training has any significant favorable effect on driver performance. Vast sums have been expended since and will be expended hence. See my *Report of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Traffic Safety* (U.S. Dept. of HEW, 1968); also, Harry H. Harman, et al., *Evaluation of Driver Education and Training Programs* (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1969).

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Their decisions have been couched in the simplistic language of an unreflective and uninformed progressivism. That they mean well is not to be doubted; *but will they do good?* Or, putting that question aside, will the court orders have the effect envisioned by the court? Just possibly. That is to say, just possibly there are some genuinely learned justices on those benches who do indeed understand the probable effect of their decisions but, informed by some involute theory of judicial restraint, choose not to let the public in on the secret.

The secret is simple enough. *If school expenditures are to be equalized within states, considerable sums will have to be taken away from schools attended by the lowest-income and the highest-income students and given to schools attended by students in the middle-income range.* This assertion could be wrong; it could be refuted. But all the evidence that comes to hand suggests that this would be the overall effect of equalizing a fixed amount of school expenditure. This is so for the very simple reason stated by Chester Finn and Leslie Lenkowsky—that poor (low-income) students, generally speaking, do not live in "poor" school districts. The tendency is otherwise. Plunkitt's Hell's Kitchen was teeming with poverty and disadvantage, but New York County was the richest county in the state. For this reason the federal aid to education programs begun in the 1960's allocated funds on the basis of the income of students' families rather than the tax base of school districts.

There is little political likelihood that as a result of court decisions any large number of school districts will actually *lose* money. Politics does not work that way. Rather, the districts with low tax bases will be "equalized" up. The result, then, will be increased expenditure on schools and increased pressure on the national government to take on a larger share of the rising cost.[4]

"Cui bono"?

Who will benefit from this? This question is easily answered: Teachers will benefit. Any increase in school expenditure will in the first instance accrue to teachers, who receive about 68 per cent of the operating expenditures of elementary and secondary schools.

[4]In a report issued June 13, 1972, the Pennsylvania Department of Education estimated that to bring per capita expenditure throughout that state up to 80 per cent of the expenditure in the highest district—a reasonable upward/downward settlement—would cost $1,052,263,235, an increase of approximately 35 per cent over the 1970-71 expenditure on elementary and secondary education in the state as a whole.

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That these are estimable and deserving persons none should doubt, but neither should there be any illusion that they are deprived. With exceptions, they are not. In general, they are deservedly well-paid professionals. Over the past two decades teachers' pay has increased at a rate roughly twice that of wages in the private economy. The average annual salary for classroom teachers in 1970-71 was $9,210. (It has since passed $10,000.) In large cities it tended to be higher, reaching $12,186 in San Francisco. The median income of men working full time year round in 1971 was just about that of teachers —but of some 2.9 million persons employed as teachers, two million were women. In that women earn only about 59 per cent of the income of men when both work full time year round, an increase in the number of teachers or an increase in teacher's pay above the general movement of wages will almost certainly increase the number of persons in higher earning brackets. Where the teacher is a married woman, family income is likely to be in the top quintile of income distribution, even the top 5 per cent. Without abusing probabilities (or asserting the existence of detailed evidence), it may be said that *increasing educational expenditures will have the short-run effect of increasing income inequality.*

Now is this what the courts intend? Possibly. The Establishment is said to do such things all the time. But the far greater likelihood is that the courts simply don't know what they are doing. This is not to insist that the analysis just outlined is correct beyond a reasonable doubt. It may yet be disproved either by events or by reanalysis of the existing data; no absolute claims are made for the dependability of each of the propositions put forward here. They represent the consensus of some knowledgeable persons; not more than that. But one has no faith whatever that the courts are even aware of such possibilities, and little faith that the paintiffs in these proceedings are aware of them either. Rather, they appear to have seized on undeniable instances in which "rich" districts contain "rich" kids and "poor" districts, "poor" kids, and where both expenditures and outcomes are so clearly unequal that any fair-minded person would feel that something ought to be done. There *is* a Baldwin Park school district in Los Angeles, *and* a Beverly Hills school district, *and* the differences between them are probably unacceptable. *But to conceive of this disparity as prototypical simply does not accord with the known facts.*

What it does accord with is certain kinds of middle-class interest. There is, first, the peripheral but discernible interest in asserting the value of things this class values and at which it excels. This is

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not to be underestimated. It reflects the vigorous exercise of the middle class citizen's desire to decide priorities. More tangibly, however, it is also a way of asserting the value, and increasing the value, of those services the middle class dispenses. There is a class economic interest at stake, and that class is pursuing its interest.

There is nothing the matter with this as such. Other groups do the same. There is hardly a more admirable group of persons than school teachers. Textbook manufacturers are said to be honest people also. One hears as much of bond holders. (Not *all* the money goes to teachers' salaries.) There are problems, however, of which one, again perhaps peripheral, is that there is more disguising of interest in these matters than is probably good for the integrity of public discourse. The objectives of what lawyers call "full disclosure" are not much advanced by the rhetoric of disinterested public service that attends what are often no more than raids on the Treasury. We don't presume disinterestedness on the part of persons whose interests reside in the growth and prosperity of the private sector of the economy. Why should those whose interests reside in the growth of the public sector be treated differently?

The self-aggrandizement of the public sector

To be sure, the public sector is better these days at making its case. The machinery of government now routinely advances the case for more government. We take this for granted in the military, but our instinct is to exempt civilians, especially those in the "helping" professions. A routine instance comes to hand in the March-April 1972 issue of *Welfare in Review,* which includes an article on "Undergraduate Training of AFDC Caseworkers" (i.e., welfare workers in the Aid to Families of Dependent Children program). It begins with routine puffery:

> Present-day social problems and increasing public understanding of their complexity are adding importance to the social caseworker's role in our society and the training he needs for his work. A master of social work degree is usually necessary for employment as a professional worker, and social work has become institutionalized.

The findings—of a survey done in New Hampshire—are set forth in the careful and competent way of this useful publication. No distinct differences were found as between caseworkers with different undergraduate majors, but one notable fact did "fall out" of the data. Asked their reasons for becoming social workers, 71 per cent of this young group (median age, 28) answered "humanitarian."

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Now one would wish this. It is surely a good thing for caseworkers to see themselves in this light. Or almost surely. But it tends to confuse public debate. Shoe factory workers in Manchester, almost certainly earning considerably less than social workers in the same city, are not permitted to declare that they have chosen their profession for humanitarian reasons. In any event, nobody asks them. The result is that public policy ends up taking more money away from the factory workers to give to social workers because the latter are engaged in humanitarian pursuits, while the former pursue pedestrian enterprises geared solely for profit.

The matter would seem a bit farfetched if we had not in New York City been exposed to almost a decade of incessant statements by social work professionals veritably urging more folks to get on welfare. In 1960, when, according to Nicholas Kisburg's calculation, there were 9.7 persons in private-sector wage and salary employment in New York City for every public welfare recipient, this posture might not have seemed unreasonable. But in 1971, with the ratio having declined to 2.6 to 1, a citizen might grow out of sorts, even to the point of associating such statements with the social work profession as a whole, which would be unjust. *And yet they do apply.* Not in the sense that this particular group of professional persons in the public sector actively desires to increase demand for its services, but in the sense that it does tend to benefit, as does any group of service-providers, from increased demand.

This is the second order of understanding that needs to be brought to bear on judicial decisions that mandate this or that increase in public services. There has been a lag in the general understanding of the relative status of the private and public sectors of the economy. For the longest time, and with the best of cases, liberals argued that while the private sector fattened, the public sector starved. Which of us has not thought that? How many of us have written articles, speeches, books reciting the litany of unmet needs? Who has not campaigned with, contributed to, voted for candidates pledged to redress this great imbalance? Well . . . we succeeded. There are individuals such as John Kenneth Galbraith to whom special credit is owed, but this has also been a general movement of public opinion.

If proof of our success were needed, it is best found in the continued *and accelerated* trends of civilian expenditure in recent administrations, regardless of party. Schultze, et al., show this with some force, as can be seen in the following table tracing the growth in federal civilian outlays:

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Growth in Federal Civilian Outlays, Fiscal Years 1955-73[1]

Period	Per Cent of Growth per Year	
	Real Outlays	Real Outlays per Capita
1955-60	7.6	5.8
1960-65	5.8	4.1
1965-70	9.1	7.9
1970-73	10.3	9.0

[1]Data adapted from Charles L. Schultze, Edward R. Fried, Alice M. Rivlin, and Nancy H. Teeters, *Setting National Priorities, The 1973 Budget* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1973), Chapter 12.

Indeed, the only dip in this otherwise steady progression is that of the Kennedy years, brought about by a cautious Administration and a hostile Congress. Otherwise the trend is steady and formidable. It is more impressive in the light of restrained military growth in the decade 1963-73, when military appropriations dropped from 53 per cent of federal expenditure to 34 per cent, and from 9.7 per cent to 7.0 per cent of GNP. Schultze, Budget Director under President Johnson, clearly had no partisan reason to call attention to these movements. They are simply unblinkable and overwhelming. That may be too strong; if they persist, they will become overwhelming.[5]

The cycle of denial and diminishing returns

Now to the irony of it all. This kind of expenditure does *not* induce a strong perception of "unmet needs" being met. Or so it would seem. Social scientists are fully capable of investigating such questions and no doubt in time some will do so. For the moment we must do

[5]In the summer of 1972, word began to come out of Washington that an "obscure" provision of a 1967 statute providing 75 per cent of federal financing of "social services" for the poor was turning into a fiscal hemorrhage. The provision lay latent for several years until discovered, according to reliable reports, by an HEW official who reported it to his home state. In 1969, HEW paid out $354 million under the "program." By 1972, state applications reached $4.8 billion. In March 1972, Maryland budgeted $22.9 million in federal aid to its social services. By June the sum had risen to $417 million. Mississippi asked for an amount roughly two-thirds its entire state budget. The uses to which such funds are put are presumably so varied at this point that no firm generalization should be made, but it would be fair to expect that a great deal of the money ended up with the middle-class professionals who dispense the "social services" specified by the legislation. A point to note is that, if spent on income transfers, $4.8 billion would eliminate about half the poverty in the land. This is only a little less than the sum required for the Nixon Administration's Family Assistance Plan, proposed in 1969, and in 1972 still to be acted on by Congress. $4.8 billion in "social services" will do little to eliminate poverty, but the dynamic of national politics at this time inserts the "social services" provision and prevents even a vote on the Family Assistance Plan. It may come as no surprise to learn that the social services professions have systematically opposed any guaranteed income plan that had any chance of passage by the Congress.

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with impressions, but these are quite strong. There is a generalized perception within that part of the electorate often described as "blue-collar" that they are paying for a lot more services than they are receiving. But among the service-dispensing classes, the overwhelming perception, genuine or dissembled, is that the nation has not "reordered its priorities" and must do so. Schultze, et al., calculate that "Great Society" programs in the federal budget grew from $1.7 billion in FY 1963 to $35.7 in FY 1973. This has made little impression. Frequently it is simply denied. To some extent this reflects the fact that the service-dispensing classes and their political allies are overwhelmingly Democratic, and understandably wish to believe that their interests are advanced only by a Democratic administration. (How many college professors, much less college students, would know that the size of the United States Army has been cut in half in the past four years, from 1,570,000 in 1968 to some 841,000 in 1973?) But in fact the pattern has little respect for party. Johnson was damned for "slashing" programs, just as Nixon has been. As Joseph A. Schumpeter once wrote, the "technique and atmosphere of the struggle for social legislation" is no friend of truth.

A simple cycle is at work which anyone who has worked for social legislation will be familiar with. As government responds to a problem and the situation commences to change, those who initiated the response, and who benefit from it in one way or another, seek to ensure continued response by charging that the situation either has not improved, or has worsened, or has always been worse than originally asserted. For some, social legislation can have the effect of narcotic drugs on the addict: Ever stronger doses are required, first to achieve the remembered euphoria of the early stages of addiction, and then merely to maintain the absence of distress.

It would, of course, be difficult to "prove" this last proposition. The Vietnam war almost surely "contaminated" all manner of public attitudes in the 1960's, especially among groups that press for social legislation and thereafter manage it. There is, however, a more general condition, certain to outlast the war, which does respond to attempts at verification by measurement. This is the condition of diminishing marginal utility of expenditure on various social services —and it feeds the cycle of denial and renewed demand. After a point, the charge that government efforts to solve a problem are not doing so begins to be true and can be shown to be such.

Public services follow production functions as do any other production processes. Typically, in an early stage increments of input

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have a high marginal utility which gradually diminishes until the exchange of input for output is no longer equal, and finally to the point where additional input is almost totally wasted as virtually no additional output results. It seems to be the case that, over a considerable range of public services, we are traversing a segment of a production function which is virtually asymptotic. (The Rand report puts it, with respect to education, that we are in a "'flat' area.") The early and exhilarating days of large increments of output for small increments of input are long past. In these circumstances "trying harder" has no discernible effect, and a perverse equilibrium is attained, at least from the point of view of those whose pleasure or profit it is to demand more. No matter how hard the polity tries to produce "more," it never does, so that the posture of demanding more is never endangered by the prospect of fulfillment.

Education would seem to be a preeminent instance of this phenomenon. As might be expected, economists have begun to discuss the subject in such terms. In 1971, Kenneth Boulding presented a paper to the American Educational Research Association entitled, "The School Industry as a Possibly Pathological Section of the American Economy." He simply noted that more input did not seem to be producing more output. The point of optimality has long been passed. A shoe factory operating in the manner of many public school systems would have long since closed down.

The case for judicial restraint

The difficulty is that public enterprises are not subject to the discipline of the market. They can be grossly inefficient, and yet go on indefinitely. Indeed, inefficiency can become a primary source of their perpetuation, for their inability to achieve declared objectives can be taken as evidence of insufficient effort and turned into a call for yet more resource allocation. The more, then, is the need for discipline—for honesty and openness and a measure of good manners—in public discussion of such matters. It is on this ground (and for my part, *only* on this ground) that the *Serrano* family of judicial decisions seems unwarranted. We have here a troubled area of public policy. Good men and women, conscientious and learned, are uncertain what to do. Is this the time for judges, some of whom come near to flaunting their indifference to research findings, to *tell* us what to do? Are laundry workers and ditch diggers and gas pumpers to be *forced* to give up more of their wages in order to pay the wages of college graduates because of some vague notion some

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judge picked up at law school in the 1930's? This trifles with our democracy. One fair to pleads with the judiciary to stay out of such matters. There are other areas of justice and right in which *only* they can provide remedy, and their authority in those areas ought not to be squandered by an injudicious frolic in the maze of public finance.

Three general points in favor of judicial restraint can be made. It may be that none carries any legal weight and the courts will find themselves obliged to continue on the course they have set, in which event we will have to make the best of it. But in these final hours, while the question is not yet settled, prudence suggests several powerful counter-arguments.

First, if there is injustice with respect to the allocation of educational resources, a political remedy is available, and there is abundant evidence that this remedy is both availed of and effective. More and more money goes into education, and of late more and more of this is "targeted" on groups whose educational needs seem greater than most. The trend, as in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, has been to unequal expenditure *in favor of* students with low-income backgrounds. This has not by any means been universally achieved, but it is a trend, and the courts should be concerned lest they deflect it.

Second, the courts should at least be aware of it when, in the name of equality of access to public services, they *order* measures that must result in increased inequality of private income. This is probably the result of increased educational expenditure, although an opposing argument can doubtless be made. This is not to say that such measures constitute bad public policy. Not at all. But they should at least be *voluntary* public policy, deliberately chosen and *legitimately* enacted by the elected representatives of the people. One cannot be fully at ease when government uses tax monies to employ middle-class professionals to persuade middle-class judges whose salaries are paid by tax monies to hand down orders to the effect that yet more middle-class persons should be hired and paid with yet more tax monies. This is not what the task force that drafted the Economic Opportunity Act of 1965 had in mind. Which is not to say it is for that reason wrong—and which certainly is not to question the role of poverty lawyers in so much of what they do —but they *are* part of government. A story used to be told around the State House in Albany about Al Smith's 1922 campaign for governor. He had lost out in the Harding landslide and was now running against a one-term Republican who hadn't a great deal to

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say but did keep harping on a bill he had signed, or refused to sign, or whatever, as a result of which he claimed the state had saved $3 million. Smith sensed that the story was catching on. He began to pursue his opponent around the state with a simple challenge: "The Governor," he would declare, "says he has saved the state $3 million. What I want to know, is where is it and who's got it." Judges can ask as much.

A third general point has to do with the overall prospects for educational expenditure: They are very good. The 1970's will see almost no increase in elementary and secondary school populations. The 1972 Manpower Report of the President projects almost no increase in the number of elementary or secondary school teachers. And yet, the economy will continue to grow, making ever greater resources available to meet a stabilized set of needs. How can the outcome not be higher teacher salaries, higher per pupil expenditure, more equal expenditure where low-income children have been unfairly left behind, and more "extras" for low-income children who obviously need them more? Nor must we accept that these "extras" will have little or no consequences. If we are now in a "flat area" with respect to the "results" of educational expenditure, there is no reason to think we cannot break out of our present constraints into a new and much wider range of opportunity. I have been involved in public policy in these areas at the state and national level. I had something to do with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. I had much to do with the creation of the President's Commission on School Finance in 1970. A fair number of hopes were dashed in that five-year interval, but not all hopes. To the contrary, as the subject came to be seen as more complex, it became more interesting, more attractive to talent. One did not have to know a great deal in 1970 to know what Rand Corporation researchers would find if asked to look into the state of knowledge on the effectiveness of schooling. One purpose of the Commission was to bring out this information in a politically neutral setting. There *is* such a thing as "the state of knowledge," and this, for the moment, is where we are at on this subject.

And that is the point! *The state of knowledge can change.* In the message to Congress proposing the School Finance Commission, the President also proposed the creation of a National Institute of Education to mount a sustained and powerful effort in just this direction. Congress hesitated a moment, and then overwhelmingly concurred. The case for approaching the issue in this manner is immensely persuasive, and the new Institute was enacted with

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strong bipartisan support. It is about to begin operations. With good luck and good management the founding of the National Institute of Education will mark a general maturing in this field and a greatly expanding federal effort extending to the whole question of school finance and the property tax. (In a recent study by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations it was established that this is by far regarded as the worst of the general taxes levied in the nation and that there is strong support for federal intervention to reduce local property taxes.) In the meantime, the President's Commission has called for full state assumption of school costs. Are these not the signs of an active and progressive area of public policy? If so, can't the courts leave it alone? If they feel they can't, no very great harm will come. The objectives of these cases are admirable, and those who brought them have done a public service in raising the particular issue involved. But can it not be left to the normal machinery of public policy to take the hint?

The new class

Whatever the courts decide, a political situation has been created which will be with us a long time. One hesitates to be more than allusive, thinking back to the Danish sailor in *Billy Budd* to whom long experience had taught "that bitter prudence which never interferes with aught, and never gives advice." But a larger prudence demands that the issue be raised.

The social legislation of the middle third of the century created "social space" for a new class whose privilege (or obligation) it is to dispense services to populations that are in various ways wards of the state. A generation ago, Schumpeter described how the ideology and manifestations of early capitalism had created social space for a new bourgeois class that stood upon a foundation of individual achievement in the economic field. Even then he sensed that this private sphere—the social space created for the bourgeoisie—was facing competition from a new "public sphere," which represented a different order of values and which was occupied by different persons. In *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* he wrote:

> This private sphere is distinct from the public sphere not only conceptually but also actually. The two are to great extent manned by different people—the history of local self-government offering the most conspicuous exception—and organized as well as run on different and often conflicting principles, productive of different and often incompatible standards.

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> Friction can only temporarily be absent from such an arrangement, the paradoxical nature of which would be a source of wonder to us if we were not so accustomed to it. As a matter of fact, friction was present long before it developed into antagonism in consequence of the wars of conquest waged upon the bourgeois domain with ever increasing success by the men of the public sphere.

These "wars of conquest" do not cease. The advent of new champions is always hailed no matter what their subsequent fate. By 1972 the *New York Times* could refer to Mayor Lindsay's newest budget as a "bloated $10 billion monster," but these were hardly the terms in which he was first welcomed on the scene, and that budget, having got to $10 billion, is not going to recede. It now amounts to an expenditure of $625 per year for every man, woman, and child in the city. The money does not *go* to every man, woman, and child, but it goes to enough of them so that he who challenges the expenditure risks devastating retorts about "human needs" and may expect no allies save such as will add to his discredit.

It was not always so. Interestingly, the labor movement was for the longest time (and in many ways still is) profoundly skeptical of eleemosynary initiatives undertaken with tax money. In a 1916 editorial in the *American Federationist*, Samuel Gompers wrote, "There is a very close connection between *employment* as experts and the enthusiasm for human welfare." Gompers' view was tolerant enough. His own movement was devoted to improving the circumstances of its members, and he saw the "experts" as doing no more than this for their own people. What he objected to was the "experts" contention that they were doing something for the workers. Trade unionism among public employees has necessarily moderated the force of this view—not long ago an important spokesman for teachers asked that the expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP be almost doubled—but the skepticism remains.

Here and there in other parts of the liberal spectrum a similar anxiety is to be encountered. Caution about "big government" can derive from more than opposition to heavy taxes. Among those who retain some of the qualities of an earlier liberalism there is a discernible concern over the "ever increasing success by the men of the public sphere." The aggression is unmistakable, and seemingly irresistible, not least because the self-interest of the new class is merged with a manifestly sincere view of the public interest. This view, that the general good is served by advancing the interests of the public sphere, is apparently the dominant social view of the time, and is terribly difficult to argue against with any success.

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An example from yet another area of education may help to clarify this point. It happens that I negotiated the phrasing of the 1964 Democratic platform plank which constituted agreement by the Roman Catholic hierarchy of the United States that it would support legislation for federal aid to education, an initiative it had successfully blocked for many years. In the understanding of the Bishops—or at least in my understanding—the platform plank represented a commitment that parochial schools would share federal aid with public schools on some approximate principle of equal treatment. The plank was adopted, the support was forthcoming, the legislation was passed, and the parochial schools got—nothing. Or near to nothing. Certainly they were not dealt with as they had reason to think they would be. They have not publicly complained. (Nor has anyone ever raised the 1964 "understandings" with me.) But they were nonetheless "used." Their mistake (and mine, too, as I look back) probably was in seeing the issue in terms of past prejudice against Catholic institutions. (Everyone was being very civilized in 1964. After all, did not the British government give aid to Catholic schools as to any other?) But this was not, I now think, the issue. The issue was that Catholic schools were not in the public sphere.

The 1972 Democratic party calls for equalization of school expenditure, in the *Serrano* manner. One has greater confidence that this commitment *will* be carried out, in large part with federal funds, and at federal initiative. These probabilities are symbolic of a new political situation: *Education has entered national politics.* Those of us who worked for this to happen may yet live to regret it. There was wisdom in keeping educational politics nonpartisan—as are most school board elections—and diffused. Bringing it into partisan politics at the national level makes for much ugliness. The increasingly corporate nature of the American social structure means that fierce, organized pressures will be brought to bear to raise expenditure, and that these will be supported by a civic culture that sees increased expenditure as a general public good. Anyone who on any grounds opposes such an increase opposes the interest of a class, and the preconceptions of the culture. There are energetic representatives of such interests, like Albert Shanker of the United Federation of Teachers, men and women who fight for their members, fight well, and fight clean. But the temptation to debase political language is considerable. The opponent of greater school expenditure readily becomes the enemy of children. This aspect of the changed political situation makes for a second somewhat ironical conclusion.

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Strategies for national education policy

The increasing political influence of the public sphere will make for increasing political instability unless public services become more effective. At long last we are going to have to take public services and public administration seriously. It is not a question of efficiency but of perceived efficacy. With the fortunes of the individual declared more and more to depend on what he receives from the public sphere, the areas in which government must successfully perform are greatly expanded, while the margins of tolerance contract. A familiar prediction. But today the condition has actually come about, and it must now be attended to. A final example from education will suggest the options seemingly open to us.

Three general strategies could be pursued as a national education policy. The first would be to leave well enough alone, even to cut back on expenditures, where they are high, to the point an economist might identify as the optimal use of resources. There is a rational case for this, and a good psychological one also. As a nation we have been generous and conscientious about education. Schools have at least processed successive cohorts of newcomers which have gone on to spectacular intellectual success. In one section of the nation one part of the population was for the longest time deliberately kept apart in segregated school systems, and there seems no question that a heavy price was paid. This calls for recompense. Such efforts can and should be made even if "things-as-they-are" is on balance accepted. (As far as *schools* go an entirely fortuitous but still spectacular compensatory event has already occurred. The pattern of ethnic succession in the cities of the North and West has been such that to a strikingly uniform degree Southern migrants have moved into previously Jewish neighborhoods. This means that one of our most educationally deprived populations is now heavily concentrated in schools which a generation earlier produced the intellectual, cultural, professional, and to a degree, economic elite of the world's most powerful nation. If it's "good" schools we're looking for, surely these begin to approximate them.) But of course this first strategy will not be adopted. It violates the principle of autogamous growth. Politicians who espouse any such approach will be effectively driven from public life.

A second strategy would be to continue increasing educational effort in the existing mode in the expectation of getting a yet better educational "product." This means pushing more and more resources along that "flat" area in the curve, or perhaps more accurately, jamming ever more resources into the ever tightening angle of an asymp-

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totic production function. Save where there are grossly unacceptable inequalities of resources (a condition that could be remedied under the first strategy), this strategy will bring about almost no changes in the standard measurements by which the existing educational system assesses results. For this reason, each new increment of resources will be demanded and justified by increasingly threatening rhetoric. Distrust and suspicion will mount.

This second strategy is the one we are now following, and it is inherently unstable. For one thing, as the public sphere expands in the announced quest for greater equality, the almost certain outcome is greater inequality deriving from the transfer of income from lower to higher social levels. This, along with the inability of services to deliver on promises beyond a certain point, leads to corruption. The public sphere begins to lie about outcomes, as by falsifying test scores—a resort so far only tentatively employed—or by manipulating outcomes through familiar devices such as social quotas.

As this is rather a dim prospect, the case becomes stronger for a third general strategy, which is to launch a serious and sustained effort to discover effective ways to achieve the goals the public has come to expect. A decade ago this would have seemed a bland enough statement. We now know it not to be. To achieve what we would wish in education, for example, is likely to require a quality of brute genius which may or may not come along. But it *could* happen; a *new* curve could be discovered. A whole new set of parameters could come into being. The education process that emerges is likely to be quite different from the schooling process we now know. A great many interests would have to be set aside to achieve such a new condition, but in the end the public interest would be served. Government has got into the business of promising more than it knows how to deliver; as there is little likelihood of cutting back on the promises, the success of the society turns on its ability to improve its performance. It is probably not a good thing to have got into this situation, but the social dynamics of an industrial society everywhere seem to lead in this direction, and to do so with special vehemence in the United States.

How should the Court proceed?

For the moment, the issue before the nation is not the general one of a national educational policy, nor the wide implications of the continued and self-induced expansion of the public sphere, but

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simply whether the courts shall order equal educational expenditure as a matter of constitutional right. One uses the phrase "before the nation" because whatever the courts order, government at large will have to put the orders into effect, and this follow-through will in turn be shaped by public opinion.

It is not unreasonable to ask the courts to know what they are ordering. The question easily divides into two parts: First, ought there to be equal educational expenditure across school districts and —let us get it over with—across states? Second, ought there to be greater educational expenditure?

One can readily imagine that the courts, pursuing general notions of equality, might find for equal expenditure. It is difficult to see how anyone would be harmed by this. An argument could be made that present arrangements make for a certain amount of diversity and local option, with the result that parents who "care" about education can "buy" more of it by moving into selected school districts. But this argument can be countered by the equally reasonable assertion that not all parents have such options, and further that the society ought to minimize the "return" from racial and class differentiation. Equal expenditure would probably "hurt" a fair number of poor children who live in high-expenditure central city school districts, but there is no evidence that it would hurt them much, and in any event it is late in the day to think of such matters.

When the courts, or rather the Court, makes its ruling on the matter of equal expenditure, it should in all conscience acknowledge that it is getting close to the question of whether the 14th Amendment permits parents to send children to private schools, where per pupil expenditure is considerably higher than in public institutions. There is an inevitable statist quality to these decisions which must be hostile to devices for evading state control. Just as important, the Court might touch on the question of whether it is constitutional for Catholic children to be sent to schools where fragmentary but persistent evidence suggests that they are educated for a fraction of the cost of education in the public schools. (They emerge just as well, or badly, schooled, which suggests something.) But in any event, the Court surely can rule for equal expenditure without doing any great injury or injustice to anyone.

On the other hand, one cannot readily imagine that the courts would knowingly order greater inequality of income distribution in the nation by mandating—or setting in motion forces that will almost surely lead to—markedly greater educational expenditure. The *Serrano* plaintiffs have not desired this. Coons and his associates

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have specifically argued for a formula that would permit variation in expenditure but not linked to variation in school district wealth. But one fears for the fate of any such subtlety. The issue is already discussed almost solely in the old terms of equal expenditure. In practice, this means greater expenditure.

Educational expenditure is growing, and will continue to grow, but this is the result of political choice, not court order. For the courts to order it is to risk scandal. The scandal may be simply stated. It is that of middle-aged and elderly men imposing social nostrums which recent social science has seriously questioned, if not demolished, and doing so slothfully, without having mastered the not always simple modes of analysis by which social scientists have developed the new evidence. The legal encounters so far (if impressions may be permitted) have been rather one-sided. The state education departments, or whatever, have been represented by the kind of counsel that represents state education departments. The plaintiffs have had razor-sharp men on their side. But at the substantive level, neither the judges nor the plantiffs have shown any taste for facts. To the contrary, they have shown considerable reluctance to stir from their *confort intellectuel,* the cozy verities of 30-year-old liberalism. It won't do. It would mean taking money from the pockets of people who need it considerably more than those into whose pockets it will be put. This is a rebuttable assertion, of course, but the courts should insist that it be rebutted before ordering anything of the sort. In the meantime there is a simple, equitable solution to the dilemma posed by the desire to bring about equality without adding to inequality. If the *Serrano* cases are to be upheld, the decision should be accompanied by an order that total expenditure not be increased as a result. That is to say, the present amount and proportion of funds expended for education should be divided up equally, raising some districts, lowering others. If overall expenditure is thereafter to be increased, it should be done through the political process, which has shown itself rather inclined in that direction. Only in this manner shall we avoid another miserable encounter between the courts and the political system of the democracy.

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Social mobility and equal opportunity

SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET

THE degree of social mobility in America has long been a point of dispute not only among social scientists but also among political advocates. The once popular acceptance of America as the golden land of opportunity, for example, rested on the belief that it offered unparalleled chances for those in the lower ranks of society to improve their position. This theory of social mobility was also adopted, though for different reasons, by socialists attempting to explain the relatively low level of class consciousness among workers in America. They argued that because American workers could realistically hope to improve their circumstances and move out of their class, they were less likely than their more deprived European counterparts to support revolutionary movements. Socialists who made these assumptions, from Marx on, anticipated the emergence of radicalism among the working classes at a later period, when changes in the economic system would have sharply reduced upward mobility. And the notion is by now widespread that the chances for upward mobility would diminish—and have in fact diminished—as a result of the ongoing processes of urbanization, industrialization, and bureaucratization.

In the past, most discussion of social mobility has focused upon the extent to which the lowly have a realistic hope of moving up

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the social ladder. The fact that it was indeed possible for some to go from rags to riches was generally taken as evidence that opportunity to rise was a reality in the United States. But today the traditional American notion of equality of opportunity has to a large extent given way to a newer, more radical version. According to this new understanding, real equality of opportunity requires not merely that the children of the lower classes have a realistic chance of achieving a high degree of success, but that they do in fact achieve such success in equal proportions with the children of the middle and upper classes. This view of equality of opportunity would demand, for example, that the children of the poorest tenth of the population be represented in institutions of higher learning or in privileged occupations in equal numbers with the children of the richest ten per cent.

Especially in the light of the stringent demands made upon the mechanisms of social mobility by this new ideal of social justice, it becomes a matter of importance to know something about the actual rates of social mobility in America. Has the rate of social mobility in America declined? What is the influence of racial and ethnic factors in this context? How does America compare with other industrialized countries in regard to social mobility? Have the Communist nations been more successful than their capitalist rivals in promoting equality of opportunity? What are the factors which seem to limit social mobility, and to what extent can they be mitigated or eliminated altogether? These are the questions which this essay attempts to answer.

Has equality of opportunity in America declined?

It has often been argued that an advanced stage of industrialization, such as that achieved by contemporary America, is likely to produce an increasing "rigidification" of social classes. But a number of analyses of the pattern of opportunity in American society clearly indicate that there has been no decline in social mobility; in fact, in some respects American society today is *less* rigid in terms of social advancement than it was in the past. A *Scientific American* survey of the backgrounds of big business executives (presidents, chairmen, and principal vice-presidents of the 600 largest U. S. non-financial corporations) found that the business elite has been opened to entry from below in a way that had never been true before in American history. Since this study has never been widely disseminated, it may be worthwhile to reproduce some of its findings here:

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> Only 10.5 per cent of the current generation of big business executives . . . [are] sons of wealthy families; as recently as 1950 the corresponding figure was 36.1 per cent, and at the turn of the century, 45.6 per cent . . . two thirds of the 1900 generation had fathers who were heads of the same corporation or who were independent businessmen; less than half of the current generation had fathers so placed in American society. On the other hand, less than 10 per cent of the 1900 generation had fathers who were employees; by 1964 this percentage had increased to nearly 30 per cent.[1]

Surprisingly both to scholars in the field and to those radicals convinced that a mature capitalism would become increasingly immobile, particularly with respect to sharp jumps into the elite, the evidence indicates that the post-World War II period brought the greatest increase in the proportion of those from economically "poor" backgrounds (from 12.1 per cent in 1950 to 23.3 per cent in 1964) who entered the top echelons of American business; and there was a correspondingly great decline in the percentage from wealthy families (from 36.1 per cent in 1950 to 10.5 per cent in 1964). A number of underlying structural trends appear to be responsible for this development: the replacement of the family-owned enterprise by the public corporation; the bureaucratization of American corporate life; the recruitment of management personnel from the ranks of college graduates; and the awarding of higher posts on the basis of a competitive promotion process similar to that which operates in government bureaucracy. Because of the spread of higher education to the children of the working classes (almost one third of whom now attend college), the ladder of bureaucratic success is increasingly open to those from poorer circumstances. Privileged family and class backgrounds continue to be enormous advantages in the quest for corporate success, but training and talent can make up for them in an increasing number of cases.

Other, more broadly-focused studies provide further evidence that there has been no hardening of class lines in American society. According to the findings of Stephan Thernstrom (who has played the leading role among historians both in doing research and in stimulating work on the part of others), there has been a continuation of a high rate of social mobility over an 80-year period. In

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[1] *The Big Business Executive/1964: A Study of His Social and Educational Background* (A study sponsored by the *Scientific American*, conducted by Market Statistics, Inc., of New York City, in collaboration with Dr. Mabel Newcomer). The study was designed to update Mabel Newcomer, *The Big Business Executive—The Factors that Made Him: 1900-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950). All comparisons in it are with materials in Dr. Newcomer's published work.

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Boston, which he studied himself, there was "impressive consistency in . . . career patterns . . . between 1880 and 1968. About a quarter of all the men who first entered the labor market as manual workers ended their careers in a middle-class calling; approximately one in six of those who first worked in a white-collar job later skidded to a blue-collar post." Almost identical patterns to Boston's have been reported in a "dozen samples [from various cities] for the period from 1850 to World War I;" about 30 to 35 per cent from manual families moved into middle-class positions in various surveys. Rates of downward mobility also do not vary a great deal; the large majority of those from middle-class backgrounds (between 70 and 80 per cent) maintained middle class status.[2]

Thernstrom notes that these findings challenge the often-voiced belief that changes in American capitalism have created a permanent and growing class of the poor. In fact, all the available evidence points in the opposite direction. Statistical data from Poughkeepsie in the 1840's, Boston in five different samples from the 1880's to recent years, and Indianapolis in 1910, as well as various post-World War II surveys, local and national, indicate that most of the sons of unskilled workers either moved up into the ranks of the skilled or found middle-class jobs of various kinds.

These conclusions are reinforced by the most comprehensive and methodologically sophisticated national sample survey of the American population, that of Blau and Duncan in 1963. They analyzed the mobility patterns of American families over several generations by relating family occupational background to first job (thus permitting a comparison of the very young still on their first job with the experience of the very old when they were young), and found that "the influence of social origins has remained constant since World War I. There is absolutely no evidence of 'rigidification.'"[3]

Recent historical research has not only challenged the conventional wisdom about mobility rates, which assumed that the growth of large corporations would mean movement from greater to lesser equality of opportunity; it has also upset long-cherished notions about the direction of change in the distribution of income from the early 19th century on. The tentative conclusion which may be reached from a number of studies is that Jacksonian America—

[2]Stephan Thernstrom, "Migration and Social Mobility, 1880-1970: The Boston Case and the American Pattern," (Paper prepared for the Conference on Social Mobility in Past Societies, Princeton, N.J.: Institute for Advanced Study, June 15-17, 1972).

[3]Peter Blau and O. D. Duncan, *The American Occupational Structure* (New York: John Wiley, 1967).

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described by Tocqueville and others as an egalitarian social system (which, compared to Europe, it undoubtedly was)—was characterized by much more severe forms of social and economic inequality than the society of the 1970's. As historian Edward Pessen points out:

> The explanation, popular since Karl Marx's time, that it was industrialization that pauperized the masses, in the process transforming a relatively egalitarian social order, appears wanting. Vast disparities between urban rich and poor antedated industrialization [in America]. . . . Even Michael Harrington and Gabriel Kolko whose estimates reveal the greatest amounts of [present-day] inequality, attribute percentages of income to the upper brackets that are far smaller than the upper one per cent of New York City controlled in income in 1863 or in wealth in 1845.[4]

Most other pre-Civil War American cities resembled New York in these respects, and even in rural areas the pattern of property distribution was extremely unequal.

Without entering into the issue of trends in the distribution of income since 1900, it is obvious that economic growth has brought with it an almost constant increase in the national income. Average per capita income has increased almost sixfold during the course of this century, and this dramatic growth has brought about a wide distribution of various social and economic benefits, usually wider than in any other country. Thus, a much larger proportion of the population graduates from high school (over 80 per cent) or enters college (close to 50 per cent) in America than in any other nation. The greater wealth of the United States also means that consumer goods such as automobiles, telephones, and the like are more evenly distributed here than elsewhere. A recent evaluation by the (London) *Economist*, using 12 social indicators to assess the relative advantages of different countries as places to live, placed the United States far in the lead over eight other non-Communist industrialized states. The wider distribution of consumer goods that inevitably accompanies greater wealth means that the gap in standards of living between American social classes, while still great absolutely, is small by comparative world standards.

Do mobility patterns differ for minority groups?

The simple analysis of varying rates of opportunity or general

[4]Edward Pessen, "The Egalitarian Myth and the American Social Reality: Wealth, Mobility, Morality in the 'Era of the Common Man,'" *The American Historical Review*, 76 (October 1971). Pessen cites many relevant recent historical works bearing on the intense forms of inequality in this period.

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consumption levels is far from the whole story with respect to the underlying pattern of opportunity over time. It is important to recognize that in America class position has been differentially distributed among ethnic and racial groups. For much of its history, the United States has been divided between "majority" and "minority" ethnic groups. The latter have, in effect, repeatedly provided new sets of recruits for the lowly paid, low-status positions, thus enabling others of less recent settlement to rise. An analysis of Census data by E. P. Hutchinson reported that in 1870 and in 1880, "the foreign-born were most typically employed in the factories, in heavy industry, as manual laborers and domestic servants. Clerical, managerial, and official positions remained largely inaccessible to them."[5] The Census of 1890 gathered information for the first time on the occupations of the native-born children of immigrants, thus permitting a comparison of the two generations. As Hutchinson shows, they varied considerably:

> Unlike the immigrant males who were in highest proportion among domestic and personal service workers, the second generation males were most numerous relatively among workers in trade and in transportation and manufacturing. It is also notable that those in the second generation were more successful in entering the professions, even though not as successful as members of the native stock (the native born of native parents). . . . Altogether, the second generation conformed more closely to the occupational distribution of the entire white labor force than did the foreign born.

This pattern, in which the second generation was, as a group, in a much better position than the immigrant generation, continued for the duration of mass immigration. Thus Hutchinson reports that in 1900 "the foreign born were no more widely distributed by occupation . . . than in 1890, but that the second generation became more widely distributed and moved closer to the occupational distribution of the entire labor force in 1900." The Census was not as comprehensive in gathering comparable occupational data from 1910 on, but the evidence clearly indicates comparable patterns to those summarized above for the remaining period of mass immigration through 1924.

More recently, particularly since the economy began a prolonged period of relatively full employment in the 1940's, migrants from various parts of North America—Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and, to a small extent, French Canadians—have furnished the bulk

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[5]E. P. Hutchinson, *Immigrants and Their Children* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1956).

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of the less skilled labor force. As Reinhard Bendix and I wrote in our analysis of mobility processes in the late 1950's:

> Now, as before, there is a close relationship between low income and membership in segregated groups. A large proportion of seasonal farm laborers and sharecroppers in the South and Southwest come from them. In the cities, Negroes, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans predominate in the unskilled, dirty, and badly paid occupations. These twenty million people earn a disproportionately low share of the national income; they have little political power and no social prestige; they live in ethnic ghettoes, in rural and urban areas alike, and they have little social contact with white Americans. Indeed, today there are two working classes in America, a white one and a Negro, Mexican, and Puerto Rican one. A real social and economic cleavage is created by widespread discrimination against these minority groups, and this diminishes the chances for the development of solidarity along class lines. In effect, the overwhelming majority of whites, both in the working class and in the middle and upper classes, benefit economically and socially from the existence of these "lower classes" within their midst. This continued splintering of the working class is a major element in the preservation of the stability of the class structure.[6]

The assumptions made in that analysis about the difference between the situations of initially underprivileged whites and blacks were given a more elaborate statistical confirmation in the largest study of American social mobility, that of Blau and Duncan. These authors found in 1963 that lowly social origin *had little negative effect on the chances of whites—including the children of white immigrants—to advance economically.* The mobility picture for whites is such that Blau and Duncan reject the notion that a "vicious cycle" perpetuates inequality "for the population at large."

But if whites, including working-class whites, experienced a fluid occupational class system, in which the able and ambitious could rise, the reverse was true for blacks. Blau and Duncan's data indicated "that Negroes are handicapped at every step in their attempts to achieve economic success, and these cumulative disadvantages are what produces the great inequalities of opportunities under which the Negro American suffers. . . . The multiple handicaps associated with being an American Negro are cumulative in their deleterious consequences for a man's career."

Education, which we have seen opens all sorts of doors for whites, even many of quite low social origin, did not work in the same way for blacks:

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[6]S. M. Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959).

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> The difference in occupational status between Negroes and whites is twice as great for men who have graduated from high school or gone to college as for those who have completed no more than eight years of schooling. In short, the careers of well-educated Negroes lag even further behind those of comparable whites than do the careers of poorly educated Negroes. . . . Negroes, as an underprivileged group, must make greater sacrifices to remain in school, but they have less incentive than whites to make these sacrifices, which may well be a major reason why Negroes often exhibit little motivation to continue in school and advance their education.

The Blau-Duncan findings on mobility data have been reinforced by a detailed analysis of racial differences in income by Albert Wohlstetter and Sinclair Coleman, using data running through the end of the 1960's. Although they report that nonwhite personal income has increased twice as fast as white since 1948, they conclude that even at the end of the last decade "nonwhite family and personal income are much inferior to white incomes along the entire distribution of each." The differences between the two groups are greatest in the upper echelons: "In fact, compared with white, there has been little or no change in nonwhite income at the top." The evidence also indicates that nonwhites are more likely to be affected by economic dips than whites. While increases in educational attainment improve income possibilities for both groups, Wohlstetter and Coleman conclude that even if education were equalized, the economic return for nonwhites would still remain far behind that for whites.[7]

Still, we cannot lose sight of the significant social and economic progress made by black Americans during the past decade. They have made their most impressive gains in the area of education. If median school years are used as an indicator of formal educational attainment, then by 1970 blacks had come very close to parity with whites. More important, 1970 Census data suggest changes in the traditional pattern of discrimination noted earlier—the pattern whereby better educated blacks were worse off economically relative to comparable whites than were blacks with less education. During the 1960's, better educated blacks improved their market position.[8] It is still true, however, that at each educational level black men earn less than comparably educated whites; as in the 1950's, for example, young black males with high school diplo-

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[7]Albert Wohlstetter and Sinclair Coleman, *Racial Differences in Income* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, October 1970).

[8]See Richard Freeman, *Black Elite: Discrimination Against Qualified Black Workers* (New York: McGraw Hill, forthcoming, 1973)

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mas still have a lower median income than young whites who have completed only grammar school. The earnings of black men relative to those of whites still decline as their educational levels increase. During the 1960's, this "earnings from education" gap began to narrow, particularly among college-educated men. The most striking transformation, however, occurred for black females. As of 1969, black females at both the high school and college level actually had a higher median income than their white counterparts. Yet, despite the considerable progress of certain segments of the black community, whites are still enormously advantaged by the presence of a racial minority which (together with other minority groups) handles a heavily disproportionate share of the less rewarded jobs and status positions.

Is there greater mobility anywhere else?

The evidence presented so far tells us a good deal about social mobility in our own country. But in order to evaluate America's performance in this area, we must also look at the evidence on mobility rates in other nations. The earliest effort at broad international comparisons of social mobility, that of Sorokin in 1927, reported on literally hundreds of limited studies in various countries, some dating back to the 19th century. While these data did not permit any systematic statistical evaluation of variations in rates, they did suggest that none of the societies or structures reported on could be described as "closed" or "non-mobile" systems. That is, all studies located substantial minorities who rose or fell in occupational status as contrasted with the jobs of their fathers or their own first jobs.[9]

Sorokin's findings and the many subsequent national surveys in many countries do reveal a number of international differences in social mobility *with the United States having a slightly higher rate.* But the differences are not substantial. Blau and Duncan conclude

[9]P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Mobility* (New York: The Free Press, 1959). The book was first published in 1927; David V. Glass, ed. *Social Mobility in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1954); S. M. Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, *op. cit.;* S. M. Miller, "Comparative Social Mobility: A Trend Report and Bibliography," *Current Sociology,* 9, no. 1 (1960), pp. 1-89; Thomas G. Fox and S. M. Miller, "Economic, Political and Social Determinants of Mobility," *Acta Sociologica,* 9 (1965), pp. 76-93; Thomas G. Fox and S. M. Miller, "Intra-Country Variations: Occupational Stratification and Mobility," in Reinhard Bendix and S. M. Lipset, eds., *Class, Status, and Power: Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective* (New York, The Free Press, 1966), pp. 574-581; Philips Cutright, "Occupational Inheritance: A Cross-National Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology,* 73 (1968), pp. 400-416.

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that there is "indeed little difference among various industrialized nations in rates of occupational mobility between the blue-collar and the white-collar class." The most recent effort at a systematic quantitative comparison of data from 13 countries by Philips Cutright suggests that countries with a higher industrial level (and lower proportion of the work force in agriculture) have higher rates of social mobility for the population as a whole. The differences, however, are considerably reduced when comparisons are limited to nonfarm population. In any case, the variations are not great, and still serve to confirm Joseph Schumpeter's insistence that "class barriers are always, without exception, surmountable, and are in fact surmounted. . . ."

The Schumpeter-Sorokin thesis, which suggests that forces making both for the hereditary transmission of advantages and for considerable mobility operate in varying types of social systems, has received striking confirmation in a number of empirical surveys of social mobility in Communist countries. Notable among these is a highly comprehensive and sophisticated survey of rates and patterns of social mobility in the most industrialized Communist country, Czechoslovakia. Czech sociologists systematically compared their 1967 data with those gathered by Blau and Duncan in 1963. Zdeněk Šafeř, a Czech scholar, concludes that the "openness of both systems . . . is surprisingly great." He stresses this finding in the context of refuting "the hypothesis frequently presented in Western sociological literature concerning the 'mobility blockade' of the socialist countries."[10] In other words, Šafeř argues it is not true that socialism means a lower rate of social mobility, that in fact its rate is as high as that under capitalism!

The comparability thesis is also strongly supported by surveys in several other Eastern European countries. As the authors of some of these studies note, their findings tend to reinforce the assumptions of the leading Polish sociologist, Stanislaw Ossowski, that the basic processes affecting rates of social mobility are structural—linked to the pace of economic development rather than to political or economic systems—and should therefore be comparable in socialist and capitalist countries. A Soviet sociologist, M. N. Rutkevich, has also noted that upward movement into the elite is inherent in the general dynamic of industrial societies, in which the "progress

[10]Zdeněk Šafeř, "Different Approaches to the Measurement of Social Differentiation of the Czechoslovak Socialist Society," *Quality and Quantity,* 5 (June 1971), pp. 205-206. See also P. Machonin, "Social Stratification in Contemporary Czechoslovakia," *American Journal of Sociology,* 75 (1970), pp. 725-741.

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of technology and culture demands an accelerated rise in the number of scientists, engineers, technicians, teachers, physicians and other experts . . ."; he explicitly indicates that these generalizations apply to America as well as the Soviet Union.[11]

In Communist countries, as in the United States and other Western nations, the growth in opportunity to enter the elite through educational achievements has seemingly led to a denigration of manual and peasant occupations. Soviet studies of occupational prestige and aspiration reiterate the findings of American surveys that the large majority of the children of the lowly aspire to high status. One Soviet scholar, V. Kantorovich, has even complained that, unlike the situation in the West, students in his country avoid working their way through school, because physical labor is regarded as degrading.

> . . . [I]n our country (and this is by no means limited to the ranks of the salaried professionals) people are prepared to condemn a juvenile—and, even more, the parents of one—who will work for pay . . . Abroad, children from diverse strata of society (except the elite, of course) regularly earn money by working as baggage-handlers, salesmen, dishwashers . . . and so forth. Should one be surprised that having been trained from childhood *only* for mental work, for study, the Leningrad secondary students . . . had decided that they were born only for the professions and not for any other kind of work? When life compels them to "become a worker," this is taken as demeaning and even as a catastrophe.[12]

Finally, Ossowski has stated that the "American conception combining classlessness with the maintenance of great differences in national income, which is contained in a certain version of the American Creed, is by no means alien to the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies in relation to their own societies." He goes on to say:

> The Socialist principle "to each according to his merits" is in harmony with the tenets of the American Creed, which holds that each man is the master of his fate, and that a man's status is fixed by an order of merit. The Socialist principle allows of the conclusion that there are unlimited opportunities for social advancement and social demotion; this is similar to the American concept of "vertical social mobility." The arguments directed against *uravnilovka* [equalization or levelling of wages] coincide with the arguments put forward on the other side of the Atlantic by those who justify the necessity of economic inequalities in a democratic society. "The maximisation of effort in an achievement-

[11]M. N. Rutkevich, "Elimination of Class Differences and the Place of the Non-Manual Workers in the Social Structure of Soviet Society," *Soviet Sociology*, 3 (Fall 1964), pp. 4-5, 11.
[12]V. Kantorvich, "Sociology and Literature," *Soviet Sociology*, 7 (Summer 1968), pp. 32-33.

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oriented society calls for considerable inequality"—wrote [the American sociologist J. J.] Spenger in 1953. This sentence could equally well have been uttered by a statesman in the Soviet Union or the People's Democracies.[13]

What factors limit social mobility?

In discussing their findings, most sociologists stress the fact that, in spite of the broadening of opportunity inherent in the expansion of intellectual occupations and of higher education, there remain strong forces (other than purely economic ones) which promote the hereditary transmission of inferior positions. In the Soviet bloc, in Western Europe, in Israel, in the United States, sociologists have found that increased educational resources and access to more and better schooling are not sufficient to make up for the cultural situation of the family and the norms and values the child receives.[14] A Soviet scholar, V. V. Ksenofontova, concludes that the "differences in career plans of workers and [upper-level white-collar] specialists are not caused primarily by material circumstances. . . . A much greater role in this matter is played by family traditions, particularly in the family's cultural level and general living conditions."[15]

Underlying the relationship between family, class background, and occupational opportunity is, of course, the long-term effect of differences in learning during the pre-school years. The most comprehensive analysis of the American research literature on "school effectiveness" concludes that the "socio-economic status of a student's family and community is consistently related to his educational outcome." As the summary states, "Background factors tend to dominate the results. . . . In fact, there is very little evidence that school resources in general have a powerful impact upon student outcomes, even rejecting the question of which school resources are influential."[16] Many experiments designed to evaluate the effect of

[13]Stanislaw Ossowski, *Class Structure in the Social Consciousness* (New York: The Free Press, 1963).

[14]An East European example is Maria Markus, "Quelques problèmes sociologiques du choix de la profession et de son prestige," in Andreas Hagedus, ed., *Etudes recherches sociologiques hongrois* (Paris: Editions anthropos, 1969), pp. 199-200.

[15]V. V. Ksenofontova, "Career Plans of 8th and 9th Grade Students in their Realization," in M. N. Rutkevich, ed., *The Career Plans of Youth* (White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1969), p. 49. This translation of a Russian volume contains 16 articles, most of which contain statistical data from different parts of the country which document the sharp correlation between socio-economic background and educational achievements.

[16]Harvey A. Averch, et al., *How Effective Is Schooling? A Critical Review and Synthesis of Research Findings* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, January 1972).

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tutoring for pre-school children, of special classes, and of integrating students with diverse class and ethnic backgrounds have also been performed in Israel, with equally pessimistic conclusions. Additional resources turn out to benefit children from middle-class homes much more than those from poor ones.[17]

The role of the family environment in perpetuating inequality has also been emphasized by French sociologists. A summary of discussions of the failure of French educational reforms suggests that what the "reformers had failed to perceive was that in their chances for success in school, middle-class children had an advantage over working-class and peasant children from earliest childhood, not from the beginning of formal instruction." This is explained as follows:

> Provided with books at an early age, stimulated by family conversations, taken to museums, plays, and concerts, impressed by the high value placed on formal education in the circles in which his family moves, and assured of financial support, a lawyer's son, for example, takes it for granted he will enter a university. . . . Because of his parents' low level of education, a working-class child receives little or no intellectual stimulation outside the classroom in which he spends only a fraction of his time. Academic learning is alien to his experience. He therefore has much less chance of reaching the upper levels of the French educational establishment than a middle-class child, *even if all structural restraints to his advancement are removed.*
>
> . . . Culture is an inheritance as surely as is wealth: "each family transmits to its children by indirect rather than direct means a certain cultural capital and a certain ethos, a system of implicit and deeply internalized values that play a part in defining, among other things, attitudes towards educational institutions."[18]

In addition to indirectly passing on such cultural advantages, upper-income parents may directly use their income to buy extra educational resources for their children. In America, this is most apparent in the widespread use of private schools by the more affluent, as well as in the generous funding of public schools in wealthy suburbs. In the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, similar processes are in operation. In 1969, the Rector of Moscow University, discussing the advantages which some applicants had in gaining admission, pointed to the fact that "many children frequently make use of the services of private coaches." In that year, 85 per

[17]Tessa Blackstone, "Education and the Under-privileged in Israel," *Jewish Journal of Sociology,* 13 (December 1971), pp. 180-182.

[18]John E. Talbott, *The Politics of Educational Reform in France, 1918-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 248-249 (emphasis mine). Talbott quotes from Pierre Bourdieu, "La transmission de l'héritage culturel," in 'Darras' [Colloque d'Arras], *Le Partage des Bénéfices: expansions et inégalités en France* (Paris, 1966).

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cent of those admitted to the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics at this university had received private special instruction before they took the entrance examination. This fact provoked *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (the Young Communist newspaper) to comment:

> With the approach of summer, many teachers at higher educational institutions display feverish activity. . . . For the duration of the coaching "boom" some even give up their summer holidays. . . . They have made out a scale of payments for their services: the average fee is 5 rubles an hour, but the children of well-to-do parents pay more.
> . . . Some fond fathers and mothers will go to any lengths to obtain a "guarantee" that their son or daughter will be accepted. Behind the closed doors of secluded houses, countless meetings and "confidential" negotiations take place [since some of the tutors are "prepared, on the basis of their connections, to guarantee success in the entrance examinations."][19]

Inequality in the Soviet Union

It is interesting to note that in the Communist countries, as in the United States, some of those seeking to reduce inequality suggest the lowering of admission standards and/or the creation of special quotas for those of lowly origins who do not qualify for admission by competitive standards. A Russian scholar, V. N. Shubkin, who has played a major role in calling attention to the way in which the Soviet competitive educational system serves to maintain hereditary school privileges, also sharply challenges the desirability of formal ascriptive standards (quotas) as a means of remedying the situation: "Efforts to establish preferential conditions for admission to higher educational institutions for particular social groups, regardless of level of preparation, not only will not help to solve the problem but, on the contrary, may reduce the general level of education, which would be equivalent to holding back the progress of science and technology."[20] Kantorovich also argues that inequality

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[19]S. S. Voronitsyn, "Class Distinction in Soviet Higher Education," *Bulletin of the Munich Institute for the Study of the USSR*, 17 (November 1970), pp. 42-43. This practice occurs elsewhere in the Communist world. An article in the Bulgarian paper *Trud* (October 20, 1970), reported that many "teachers, lecturers, readers, and scientists have been organizing private schools and courses. . . . A victim of this racket said 'my family are at the end of our resources, we have paid over 700 *leva* for private lessons.'" In a subsequent issue of *Trud* (November 11, 1970), letters discussing the situation appeared, in which it was commented that "frequently the parents' desire to secure a place in the university for their children appears to justify the expenditure of large sums of money on private tuition." (The quotes from *Trud* are reported in *ABSEES: Soviet and East European Abstract Series.*)

[20]V. N. Shubkin, "Youth Starts Out in Life," *Soviet Sociology*, 4 (Winter 1965-1966), p. 11.

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stemming from varying family cultural backgrounds, such as the fact that "children will develop more rapidly in the family of a professor . . . cannot be resolved by the use of reduced entrance examinations." Rather he suggests that "there is no reason why forms of additional positive help to able children from low-income parents cannot be given: for example, schooling in certain ethnic districts of the USSR is a year longer than usual."

During the Khrushchev era, efforts were made to modify the inegalitarianism in higher education by requiring 80 per cent of the entering students to have been previously employed for at least two years, and by making vocational training obligatory in all secondary schools. These efforts, designed to influence occupational choice by upgrading manual work, had little effect. The quota for those with work experience was dropped in 1965, ostensibly because it lowered the quality of higher education, but also because it was evaded in practice by many institutions. "Soviet educational authorities have pretty definitely rejected the idea that standards should be lowered in any way for the disadvantaged and the unprepared. If the drive for equality of educational opportunity is to continue, Soviet educational authorities believe that it must take two forms: equalization of the quality of primary and secondary education, particularly as between the cities and the small towns and villages; and special programs for launching the graduates of inadequate schools into higher education on an equal footing with other students."[21] It should be noted, however, that entrance requirements favor those from culturally privileged backgrounds. In a statement issued in 1969, the Soviet Minister of Higher Education "made it clear that the sole qualification for admission is the applicant's level of formal knowledge. The long-standing ban (from 1936) on any kind of testing but academic subject-matter tests has thus far made it impossible to include aptitude or achievement tests as admission criteria." The effect of these changes, as sociological investigations make clear, has been "some decline in the proportion of workers and peasants (in terms of social composition) among students." Seemingly in answer to criticisms that such a trend violates socialist values, L. I. Sennikova argues that this drop "does not by any means signify that Soviet higher schools have lost in the slightest degree their distinguishing feature—their genuinely public character. Em-

[21]Robert J. Osborn, *Soviet Social Policies: Welfare, Equality, and Community,* (Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1970). For a detailed discussion by a Soviet sociologist of the 1958 reforms, and arguments for dropping them, see M. N. Rutkevich, "Social Requirements, the Educational System and Career Plans of Youth," in Rutkevich, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 2-9.

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ployees and intelligentsia are also part of the people, the working people."[22]

The degree of inequality in the Soviet educational system is considerable. Evidence brought together by MIT Sovietologist Zev Katz from the published work of Soviet scholars points to variations as great as those in advanced Western countries. The chances of obtaining higher education for the children of peasants as compared with the scions of the urban intelligentsia are

> something between 1:16 and 1:24. . . . If data were available for still more narrowly defined groups, such as the children of *unskilled* farm laborers and of parents belonging to the *higher* intelligentsia, the disparity in chances for higher education would probably be twice or three times greater. . . . A study of the average length of schooling received by children in the towns of Ufa and Orenburg, for example, showed that children of peasant families received an average of 7.31 years of schooling, the children of working-class families 7.66 years, and the children of the intelligentsia (broadly defined to include all non-manuals) 12.22 years. . . . A study of students enrolled in three high-prestige departments in Leningrad University in the summer of 1967 showed that the offspring of specialists, who are classed as members of the higher intelligentsia and constitute only 10 per cent of the population, occupied 60.6 per cent of the available places. . . .[23]

In commenting on findings such as these, Sennikova noted: "This is a completely understandable phenomenon. Such higher educational institutions as the Medical College and the University are attended by large numbers of children of doctors, teachers, and the like, for among the intelligentsia these occupations are often 'hereditary.'"

The correlation between family socio-economic background and educational advancement means that much of the public expenditure on higher education serves as a "transfer payment" from the less affluent to the more well-to-do, and thus reinforces inequality. Such conclusions about the class bias of "free" systems of higher education in America were made in the late 19th century by two radical economic theorists, Karl Marx and Henry George. The founder of revolutionary socialism noted that the fact that some of the "higher educational institutions [in America] are also 'free' only

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[22]L. I. Sennikova, "Higher Education as a Factor in Social Mobility," in M. N. Rutkevich, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 147.

[23]Zev Katz, "Sociology in the Soviet Union," *Problems of Communism*, 20 (May-June 1971), pp. 32-33. For detailed summaries and discussions of the evidence bearing on the existence of various forms of inequality in the Communist states, see David Lane, *The End of Inequality? Stratification under State Socialism* (London: Penguin Books, 1971); and Frank Parkin, *Class Inequality and Political Order: Social Stratification in Capitalist and Communist Societies* (London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1971).

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means in fact defraying the cost of the education of the upper classes from the general tax receipts." Henry George made the same point when he commented that the University of California was a place to which the children of the poor sent the children of the rich. This proposition was recently documented by a comparative survey of the median incomes of families with children in different levels of public higher education in California (the university, state colleges, junior colleges) and those without children at these institutions. As anticipated, those benefiting from public higher education had a much greater income than those not, and the more prestigious the type of school the children were in, the higher the family income. The authors estimated that families with children attending the University of California received an average subsidy of $4,900.[24]

The thesis that many publicly supported "free" institutions actually represent a subsidy from the less privileged to the more privileged has also been advanced in the Soviet Union. Thus Kantorovich asks "to what degree free services which in our country add 35 per cent to total wages and salaries, act in the proper direction, particularly 'to give a boost' to the children of the materially least prosperous and least educated parents. Which family—that with many children, or one from the non-manual category with but a single child—receives more material aid per capita from the free benefits provided by the society?"

Inequality and the family

As these studies by Communist scholars themselves show, the advanced Communist countries have been no more successful than the advanced Western countries in removing all major barriers to upward social mobility. In all the industrialized nations, higher education is an almost essential prerequisite for social advancement. And despite the efforts of many societies to insure that educational resources are equally available to all, everywhere lower-class children seem unable to take full advantage of them. It would be possible to offer a genetic explanation for this phenomenon, but such an argument is unnecessary in view of the enormous importance of cultural influences which are transmitted through the family. Recently

[24]W. L. Hansen and B. Weisbrod, "The Distribution of Costs and Direct Benefits of Public Education: the Case of California," *Journal of Human Resources*, 4 (Spring 1969), pp. 178-179, 181-182, 185. Wisconsin data are comparable; see note 5, p. 184.

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reemphasized by sociologists, the central role of the family in the handing down of social inequality has been recognized at least since the time of Plato.

In the *Republic,* Plato indicated that in the just society it would be necessary to take children away from their parents and have them raised by the state, in order to eliminate the tendency toward inherited social privilege. In the early 19th century, Robert Owen specifically proposed that all children, regardless of the class status of their parents, be educated from childhood in state-supported boarding schools. This suggestion was actually advanced by leaders of the New York State Workingmen's party of the 1820's and 1830's. In party documents they argued that since the social environment in families of varying wealth and culture differed greatly, the only way to assure that the children of the poor had the same chance for success as those of the well-to-do was to send all to public boarding schools. Writing in 1830, these early American radicals, anticipating recent sociological research, held that integrating the children of the rich and of the poor in the "common" (integrated) school was not enough. For they argued that the most important part of education goes on outside the classroom:

> For our parts, we understand education to mean everything which influences directly or indirectly the child's character. To see his companions smoke segars is a part of his education; to hear oaths is a part of his education; to see and laugh at drunken men in the street is a part of his education. And if any one thinks that an education like this (which is daily obtained in the streets of our city) will be counteracted and neutralized by half a dozen hours of daily schooling, we are not of his opinion. . . .
>
> Is not the development of social habits, of the dispositions, of the moral feelings, the most important of the teacher's duties? And what opportunity is there of fulfilling them, unless the pupil be at all times under his very eye and control?
>
> We conceive, then, that State Schools, to be republican, efficient, and acceptable to all, must receive the children, not six hours a day, but altogether; must feed them, clothe them, lodge them, must direct not their studies only, but their occupations and amusements; must care for them until their education is completed, and then abandon them to the world, as useful, intelligent, virtuous citizens.
>
> We do not consider this question regarding day schools and boarding schools as a non-essential matter that may be decided either way without ruin to the cause. On its decision depends whether the system of education which the people call for, shall be a paltry palliative, or an efficient cure; whether aristocracy shall be perpetuated or destroyed; whether the poor man's child shall be educated or not; whether the next generation shall obtain their just rights or lose them.

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There are few reformers today who would be prepared to make a suggestion as radical as this one. Perhaps even more than the taking away of children from their parents, the kind of all-pervasive moral supervision called for by the New York Workingmen probably seems repugnant even to today's most committed egalitarians. But it is necessary to raise the question of whether these radicals of the 1830's did not see the issue more clearly and reason about it more consistently than many radicals of the 1970's. For if one really wishes a society in which there is not merely formal equality of opportunity, but where class background has absolutely no relation to success, one must be willing to pay the necessary price. And that price would appear to include the practical abolition of the family, the suppression of varying cultural and ethnic influences, and a rigorously imposed uniformity in the education of the young. As the Communist experience has shown, the abolition of capitalism, at least in itself, is by no means sufficient.

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Who are the elite intellectuals?

CHARLES KADUSHIN

THERE are almost as many works about intellectuals as there are intellectuals, and most of these works follow a standard formula. Almost half the piece is devoted to a definition of what an intellectual is. Once this is settled, the social characteristics of intellectuals are then debated: Are intellectuals today old or young? Are American intellectuals all to be found in New York City or has the growth of the university dispersed them across the country? Is there an inner clique or family of intellectuals who rule the roost? Is it true that most intellectuals are Jews? Is there a system of two or three cultures, in which scientists and perhaps social scientists are exiled to a world separate from that of the literary elite? After these questions comes the denouement—an attack on, or defense of, the role of intellectuals in modern society.

This formula is reasonable enough, but the present essay concentrates principally upon the social characteristics of the intellectual elite. It attempts to identify and describe the top American intellectuals objectively, with statistics, and to give some indication of their stand on social and political issues. For any debate on the social value of the intellectuals must rest upon a firm foundation of fact. Moreover, because this study allows intellectuals to define and locate themselves, the problem of definition is easily solved.

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In every intellectual field, as in many trades, the *bona fide* member is one who is so certified by those who are already members; a physician is a person whom other physicians say is a physician, a scientist is a person whom other scientists say is a scientist, and so a leading intellectual is simply a person whom other leading intellectuals believe to be a leading intellectual. This way of identifying intellectuals is not as circular as it sounds. Each field has a regularized method for certifying its members. There are boards of physicians and Ph.D. committees of scientists; even plumbers are licensed by other plumbers. The "board" or "examining committee" that admits a person to elite intellectual status is the editorial board of the intellectual journal. A leading intellectual is simply any person who writes regularly for leading intellectual journals and/or has his books reviewed in them. While the sheer number of appearances in these journals is strongly related to intellectual prestige, it is not the only indicator. There are some leading intellectuals who write only infrequently but who are nevertheless highly regarded by the intellectuals who do write often. The opinion of those who form the entourage or circle which surrounds most of these intellectual journals is therefore also important in certifying the intellectual elite. By identifying and interviewing those who write for the leading intellectual journals, we have identified the American intellectual elite.

The function of journals and circles

Why journals and informal intellectual circles are so much more important than universities, honorary societies, and academies or special clubs in the certification of American intellectuals requires some explanation. An elite intellectual may be defined roughly as one who is an expert in dealing with high-quality general ideas on questions of values and esthetics and who communicates his judgments on these matters to a fairly general audience. This is a role that predates modern occupational specialization, and it has always been filled by persons of many different full-time occupations. Priests, shamans, journalists, teachers, and emperors have at times played leading intellectual roles, and even today the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* contains no listing for "intellectual." It is this lack of occupational specialization which has been largely responsible for the controversy about how to define an intellectual.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the chief agency for certifying intellectuals was the salon or circle. With the Enlightenment

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came a confusing rush of new ideas about values and esthetics which had to be sorted out. The salon or circle was rapid, efficient, and vicious in its evaluation of ideas and of the persons who developed them. By starting with the main hostesses and the few important coffee houses or bistros, one could compile a list of almost all the intellectuals who counted in those days. (An equivalent method may still work fairly well today in some European capitals, as well as in underground anti-Establishment circles.)

As in the case of so many other institutions of modern industrial society, it is the British who are responsible for the key social innovation which adapted the principle of the intellectual salon to the necessities of an age in which the number of literate and well-educated persons became suddenly and vastly larger. In the early 19th century the *Edinburgh Review* created the model for a literary-political (and sometimes even scientific) journal, associated with a circle and salon, and read by "everybody" who counted. In varying degrees the model has been followed by every intellectual movement since, and the key intellectuals for any social movement—reactionary, conservative, liberal, or radical—are found in the pages of the intellectual journals.

There are, of course, a number of intellectual organizations and institutions in the United States today other than journals, but in each case they are insufficient in themselves to guarantee certification of the leading American intellectuals. Despite some noteworthy exceptions, 90 per cent of the leading American intellectuals have college degrees. But the growth and proliferation of American universities has doomed them as certifiers of the intellectual elite. Their size and geographic dispersion make difficult the regular interaction necessary for evaluating ideas. There are about 400,000 professors in regular four-year colleges and universities in the United States, and about half of them, according to a study conducted for the Carnegie Commission by Ladd, Lipset, and Trow, agree with the statement, "I am an intellectual." This gives us at least 200,000 self-proclaimed intellectuals in the United States, and surely others besides university professors would include themselves in this group. If we are more selective and consider only the 8,000 or so professors in the humanities and the social sciences who have written at least 20 professional articles and who teach in what the Carnegie Study calls high-quality universities, we find 90 per cent of this group saying they are intellectuals.[1] This amounts to over 7,000 persons who

[1] Our special thanks to Everett Ladd and Seymour Lipset, who made this data available to us for special tabulations. All interpretations are our own.

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may indeed constitute a core of the intellectual community, but who are surely too large a number for the very top leadership. But even apart from the question of number, many of these professors are narrow specialists and not, even from their own point of view, general experts on policy or values.

Besides the universities, there are several other sorts of organizations which attempt to certify the intellectual elite, and almost all American intellectuals belong to one or another of them. There are trade or professional organizations and academic guilds such as the American Sociological Association, the Modern Language Association, the Authors' Guild, the National Press Club, and PEN. Each of these engages in some professional functions and some intellectual ones, but even PEN, which exercises some selectivity and has broad concerns, is not exclusive enough for our purposes. None pretends to rank its members or evaluate their ideas. And despite the efforts of "radical caucuses" and the like, American academic societies still concentrate on fairly narrow and technical matters.

Then there are official "king-making" honorary societies, such as the American Academy of Arts and Sciences or the National Institute of Arts and Letters. But these tend to nominate persons who have already made their mark, generally because of some specialized achievement. Many of their members were never active outside of their specialty, and others have long since retired from active intellectual combat. Curiously, the New York-based Century Club may come closer to what we have in mind than any other formal group, but it tends to exclude many who ought to belong and also includes many who clearly do not belong to the intellectual elite.

Intellectual journals thus remain the one major institution which certifies the top intellectuals. Their editors serve in the capacity of salon hostesses deciding who may enter and how long he may speak. Many journals are the center of lively intellectual circles. Most important, the journals connect an inner core of top intellectuals with a larger audience of intellectually active persons.

How to find the intellectual elite

Finding the leading intellectual journals is not difficult. If one does not quibble over their relative rank, then almost anyone's list of the 20 or so leading intellectual journals should do. The idea is to include journals of general interest and to exclude specialized or technical ones such as the *American Historical Review*. In 1969, we obtained ratings from a sample of professors, writers, and editors

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and found that the 20 or so leading American intellectual journals included the *New York Review of Books, The New York Times Book Review, New Yorker, New Republic, Commentary, Harper's, Partisan Review, Saturday Review, The Nation, Atlantic, Daedalus, Ramparts, Yale Review, Dissent, American Scholar, The Hudson Review, The Village Voice, The Progressive, Foreign Affairs,* and *The Public Interest.* Neither the entries on this list nor the various rankings we tabulated within it are permanent.[2] The intellectual bourse constantly changes its listings, and several of the journals on our list obviously had their ups and downs since the poll was taken; but on the whole the top 20 are still the top 20.

Once the leading journals are found, locating leading intellectuals is quite straightforward. Our sample of leading intellectuals was drawn from the 8,000 or so persons who contributed to the top 22 intellectual journals during the five-year period 1964-1968. The more often a person wrote or the more times his books were reviewed, the more likely he was to be drawn into the sample. Columnists, of course, were handled differently, and editors were automatically included. We also interviewed a dozen intellectuals whom we did not happen to sample but whose names came up very often in the course of interviews with those whom we did sample.

All told, then, our findings about American intellectuals are based on 110 individuals scientifically sampled and interviewed during the calendar year 1970. By our definition, there are probably about 200 leading American intellectuals, so we have more than half of them in the sample. Our "contract" with the persons we interviewed forbids us to reveal their names, but a do-it-yourself attempt on the part of any reader who cares to try our methods informally would probably come very close to reproducing our list of elite intellectuals.

One word more about the list. If there is a prejudice among American intellectuals that quantity does not equal quality, this was not demonstrated in our sample drawn essentially on the basis of quantity of production. For there is a very high relation between inclusion in our sample and the number of times an intellectual was mentioned as important by other intellectuals interviewed. And the more times a person's books were reviewed in the journals, the more times he was mentioned as important by other intellectuals.

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[2] The ins and outs of intellectual journals are described in Kadushin, Hover, and Tichy, "How and Where to Find Intellectual Elite in the United States," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 35 (Spring 1971), 1-18; and Hover and Kadushin, "Influential Intellectual Journals: A Very Private Club," *Change Magazine,* 4 (March 1972), 38-47.

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What do they do for a living?

Now that we have indicated how we tracked down the leading intellectuals, we can give an objective portrait of their characteristics. We said that being an intellectual is not an occupation. Just how do intellectuals earn their living? About 40 per cent of the 172 intellectuals we tried to interview (there were 62 we never caught up with) are professors, almost 40 per cent are editors or staff members of leading journals or newspapers, and somewhat over 15 per cent are free-lancers, including several poets and some novelists and short story writers as well as journalists and essayists. Announcements of the demise of the free-lancer, so loudly bemoaned by so many, seem a bit premature, and the alleged domination of the intellectual elite by academics is also a mistaken impression. It is true that older intellectuals are more likely to become professors; less than 30 per cent of those under 50 are professors, but almost half of those over 50 are academics.

Of the academics among the intellectual elite, half are in the humanities but more than 40 per cent are social scientists, an occupation relatively new to the ranks of intellectuals. Because journals are so important in certifying the intellectual elite, the group we are talking about has often been called "literary intellectuals." While it is true that the ability to write well and often is important, the presence of so many social scientists suggests that the term "literary" is misleading. And though English professors are the dominant element among the professors in the humanities, they make up only half that group; the rest are split about evenly between historians and a miscellaneous set of fields including foreign languages, comparative literature, and so on. As for the social scientists, they divide into four more or less equal groups: economists, political scientists, sociologists, and a miscellaneous group including anthropology, geography, psychology, and the like.

The list of occupations of intellectuals offers strong verification of Snow's "two cultures" hypothesis. Only one scientist, a biologist, was on our entire list of 172, which also included one science writer who was formerly a scientist. Had our list of journals included *Science*, *Scientific American*, or the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, the results might have been different. But these, after all, are specialized journals, one of them the organ of a professional organization. We are not denying the elegance of science or the indisputable fact that it demands a high degree of intelligence and creativity. It is simply that most leading scientists tend to be diffident about communicating their non-expert personal values and feelings to general

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audiences. When they do make policy or value pronouncements, these tend to be one-shot affairs in the mass media. Some public work takes place in committees for this or against that (at the moment, mainly against the Vietnam war and for the preservation of the environment), but aside from their signatures on published petitions, and the adornment their names lend to political pressure groups, most leading scientists can hardly be said to contribute to public debate on such issues. Even where missiles and bombs are concerned, most of the political activity of scientists (and there has been much) is private rather than public and is directed toward influencing high officials rather than toward changing the values of the thinking public. As Deborah Shapely acidly noted in the March 31, 1972 issue of *Science*, "One can climb to high posts, eventually [in the science-government circle] without the encumbrance of having to publicly stand for anything."

The importance of New York

After occupation, geography, curiously, is the one fact about intellectuals of greatest interest to themselves. They constantly refer to Paris and London as model intellectual centers. Most share the opinion expressed to us by a leading critic:

> I don't think that there is really anything that can now be called the intellectual community in the U.S.—not in the same sense that one can talk about an intellectual community in Paris or even an intellectual community in London-Oxford-Cambridge. There was for some 15 years an intellectual community in New York City centered around *Partisan Review* and *Commentary*, and this played to some extent the traditional role of an intellectual community in the capital cities of Europe. But over the past 10 to 15 years the universities have swallowed up most of the people in it, and now you have a spattering of intellectual communities all over the country.

We think intellectual life in America was always more scattered than in Europe. And perhaps it is in comparison with European patterns that New York seems to be on the decline as an intellectual center, though, as will be seen, there are other reasons for this impression. Yet the facts show that there is still a strong concentration of intellectuals in the New York area. Seventy per cent of the editorial offices of the top 25 intellectual journals are within 10 miles of the Empire State Building. Over 50 per cent of the American intellectual elite themselves are still located within 50 miles of the Empire State Building. (We call this latter range "lunch distance"—

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the area within which it is easily possible for an author to have lunch with his publisher and return home the same day.) Reflecting American tradition, New England (especially Boston-Cambridge) still has a large concentration of intellectuals, though its 14 per cent simply does not put it in the same class with New York. The rest is a scatter, except for Washington, D.C., which while it cannot rival European capitals, still can boast a surprising 11 per cent of the total.

New York still serves as a magnet. Among intellectuals who grew up in Europe, New England, Washington, or New York itself, over 60 per cent now live in New York; 40 per cent of the others now live there too. But New York's preeminence in intellectual life, as well as the rumor that its preeminence is declining, may possibly be traced to the fact that one third of the American intellectual elite actually grew up in New York City. Since 40 per cent of these natives have left New York, and since they were the largest contingent to begin with, it is easy to understand why it is often said that "everyone" is leaving New York. Then too, a good proportion of elite intellectuals who left New York are academics, and academics have tended to write more about intellectuals than non-academics. The academics' vision of this world is a bit distorted, for about 55 per cent of the non-academics live in New York, as against only about 40 per cent of the academics.

Half of the academics are concentrated at just four universities: Columbia and Harvard each have 16 per cent of our academics on their faculties, and Yale and NYU tie for second place with nine per cent each. The figures for undergraduate and graduate school attendance among elite intellectuals show a similar degree of concentration. Harvard was the leading undergraduate school with 12 per cent, CCNY had 10 per cent, and Yale and Columbia trailed just behind CCNY. Of those who did graduate work, 25 per cent went to Columbia, 16 per cent to Harvard, and 5 per cent to Yale.

Contemporary intellectual circles

There are other reasons why, despite its concentration of intellectuals, New York may appear to some no longer to be the center it once was. There are now a number of circles of leading intellectuals in the United States, and they vary considerably in their geographic distribution. Thus, whether or not New York is the center depends to a large degree on which intellectual circle one is talking about. To identify these circles, we used a new computer technique devel-

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oped by Richard Alba which, given interview information about who talks to whom and who considers himself close to whom, groups this information into statistically reliable and mathematically based clique structures. As of 1970, about 70 per cent of the top American intellectuals whom we interviewed belonged to one clique or another, but there were at least six cliques of which two were quite separate from the rest:

1) There was a small group concerned with the environment and arms control, consisting of biological scientists, an anthropologist, and a leading editor.[3]

2) There was also a small Radical Circle, tightly knit, very much *not* in New York City, with a strong West Coast contingent and almost totally unconnected with the rest of the cliques.

3) A noticeable *Partisan Review* Circle still existed, but it is quite small and not clearly separated from the remaining groups of intellectuals, who were arranged in three interconnected circles.

4) The largest of these, with about one third of the intellectual elite as members, consisted of both social scientists and literary men. The majority of this circle, especially its social scientists, do not live in New York, and it has a strong Cambridge-Boston representation. The members of what we might call the Social Science-Literary Circle characteristically write for *The Public Interest* and for *Commentary,* and to a lesser extent, for *Partisan Review* and *Dissent.*

5) Then there was a Literary Circle, almost three quarters of whom live in New York. They tend to write for journals such as *New Yorker, Harper's, Atlantic, New York Review of Books,* and others, but hardly ever for *Commentary* or *The Public Interest.*

6) The last and perhaps the most interesting circle may best be called the Center Circle, for its members overlap with both the Literary and the Social Science-Literary Circles. This Center Circle resides almost wholly in New York. Generally somewhat older and more prestigious than members of other circles, the intellectuals in this set also tend to write for a variety of the very top journals.

American intellectual circles may be undergoing a period of transition, for most circles are connected not with one or two journals, but with an oligopoly consisting of about 10. To be sure, journals still serve the function of certifying the intellectual elite and communicating their ideas, and intellectual circles are still

[3]The circles we identified are not composed exclusively of those intellectuals we interviewed; they also include others who were named by two or more interviewees. This accounts for the presence of several biological scientists in the first circle, despite the fact that there was only one on our list of 172 intellectuals.

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connected with them, but, with some exceptions, the connection with any single journal is usually quite loose.

Especially symptomatic of this looser structure is the absence of a definable circle around the current leading intellectual journal, the *New York Review of Books*. There is no such thing as a "*New York Review* Crowd." There is no evidence that *New York Review* writers tend to "hang out" with each other more than they do with other intellectuals. *New York Review* authors are drawn from a wide geographic base and from several different circles. In a peculiar way this arrangement gives the *Review* more of the aura of a mass-media journal. And because they are not directly subject to second guessing by an inner clique, *New York Review* editors may have more individual power than editors of other journals who share their power with their circle. Whether the situation described here is temporary or portends a whole new pattern of life for American intellectuals it is simply not possible to predict at this point.

Religion, age, class, and sex

The dominance of New York is often associated with the supposed dominance of Jews in American intellectual life. Jews are indeed much more strongly represented among leading intellectuals than in the population at large. They compose about half of the American intellectual elite; Catholics are vastly underrepresented, but Protestants, who are one third of the group, are also relatively underrepresented. But there is no difference today between New York and the rest of the country in the proportion of the intellectual elite who are Jews or Protestants—though most of the Catholics now live in New York. It is true that three fourths of those in our sample who grew up in New York are Jews, and 90 per cent of those brought up in the South are Protestant. Most of those who emigrated to the United States are Jews. But beyond these facts, geography does not seem closely associated with the religious background of intellectuals, most of whom in any case describe themselves today as "indifferent" or "opposed" to religion.

How large a 50 per cent representation is depends on one's point of view. (The proportion of Jews is somewhat higher among the academic segment of the intellectual elite, for 60 per cent of the Jews—and only 30 per cent of the non-Jews—are professors.) Surely not "everyone" is Jewish, as some intellectuals we have talked with seem to feel. In the key Center Circle, the majority are not Jews; and Jews are a minority in the Literary Circle, in the

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Biologists Circle, and among non-clique members. Then there is the question of whom the intellectual elite should be compared to. Certainly, in comparison with the rest of the American elite, the intellectuals are overwhelmingly Jewish. Even in comparison to elite American professors (those who published more than 20 articles in academic journals and who teach in high-quality colleges and universities) of the same age and in the same fields, there are between two and five times as many Jews in the intellectual elite.

The matter of age brings up the question of the effect of generation on the composition of the elite intellectuals. As with any elite, the American intellectual elite tends to be older than the group from which it is drawn. Only one third of the elite intellectuals who are social scientists are under 50 years of age, as compared with two thirds of elite professors of social science; similarly, one quarter of elite intellectuals who are in the humanities are under 50, but more than half of the top professors of humanities in the country are under 50. Taken as a group, one third of the intellectual elite is under 50, one third is between 50 and 60, and one third is over 60. The group over 60, of course, represents the generation that came of age in the 1930's and early 1940's. The group between 50 and 60 came to intellectual maturity at the end of World War II, while those under 50 grew up intellectually mainly during the Cold War period. (There were few elite intellectuals under 35.) Surprisingly, the effect of these generational differences upon the opinions of intellectuals is negligible.

In one area generation does make a difference. Throughout all of Western Europe there has been a tendency in the 20th century for intellectual careers to be more and more open to talent, whatever a person's class origin. And so today more elite intellectuals come from lower-class backgrounds than do other Western elites. (The very opposite holds true for Eastern Europe—intellectuals there have higher class origins than the rest of the elite.) This trend is observable even among American intellectuals, for while barely over 10 per cent of the fathers of elite intellectuals over 60 came from a manual background, 40 per cent of the fathers of younger elite intellectuals were manual workers.

Becoming an elite intellectual implies for many substantial upward mobility. When it comes to current class position, the elite intellectuals are indeed an elite. Their median family income in 1969 was about $35,000, considerably more than that earned by leading university or college professors. Of course, intellectuals who are at the top of their heap earn a good deal less than those at the

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top of the heap in other institutional areas, such as business or even politics.

Finally, we have to note that very few women indeed were among the top American intellectuals in 1970.

Liberal—but not radical

Given their background and position, just where do elite intellectuals stand politically in comparison to everyone else? To the left. The American intellectual elite is more liberal on any issue of public policy than the American public at large, more liberal than any other segment of the American elite[4], and generally more liberal than the elite university and college professors surveyed in the Carnegie study (with appropriate controls for age, field, and religion). In an important review of the politics of American and Soviet intellectuals, Lipset and Dobson in the Summer 1972 issue of *Daedalus* conclude, on the basis of the Carnegie study of American professors and other data, that intellectuality *per se* seems to make a person more liberal and more critical of the policies of the regime.[5] If our sample is more "intellectual" than even the elite among the Carnegie study sample of American professors, then we have additional verification of their hypothesis. It is being an intellectual *per se* that counts. Except on some of the older issues related to socialism and capitalism, where Jewish elite intellectuals tend to be more to the left than others, social class background and even age are unrelated to opinion among the intellectual elite. If anything, elite intellectuals from working-class backgrounds are more conservative than the rest; younger members of the elite intellectuals act as if they had grown up in the 1930's with the then radical generation; and non-Jews vote almost 100 per cent Democratic or third-party just like the Jews. The elite intellectuals have so long been involved in the culture of intellectuals that their past backgrounds have become almost irrelevant.

To be sure, there are important variations among the different intellectual circles. The small Radical Circle is really radical, but also very isolated. For example, 75 per cent of the Radical Circle agree that traditional politics cannot produce change in the United States, whereas less than 20 per cent of the rest of the intellectual elite think so! The Social Science-Literary Circle is more conservative in both its political opinions and its general style (to give a

[4]This is shown by the Bureau of Applied Social Research's study of American leaders directed by Allen Barton, Bogdan Denitch, Carol Weiss, and myself, of which this study is a part.

[5]See also Ladd and Lipset in the June 9, 1972 issue of *Science*.

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slightly silly but nonetheless revealing indicator, 100 per cent of the Radical Circle believe that rock music is an important contribution to American culture; two thirds of both the Center Circle and the Literary Circle, more than half of non-circle members, but less than half of the Social Science-Literary Circle agree). Still, compared to almost any other group they might reasonably be compared with, even the Social Science-Literary Circle is liberal. (There is, of course, a genuinely conservative circle centered around the *National Review*, but very few of its members appeared in our study.)

But this is not to say that most of the intellectual elite are radical. They are not. In 1970, less than half wanted to get out of Vietnam immediately, even though most intellectuals had strongly opposed the war since 1965, long before any other group in the population. And their opposition remained mainly on pragmatic grounds—the war did not work—rather than on ideological or even moral grounds. A large number of intellectuals are actively concerned about race, but most oppose "Black Power" and most frankly admit they do not know how to solve America's race problems. The cultural crisis and the changing values of youth are of even more concern to the intellectuals than is race, but most of them feel that the young are way off base. Only a few of the intellectual elite are devoted today to the overthrow of "capitalism" as a system, though one third described themselves as "radical" in their youth. It is for these reasons that some of the younger academics have attacked the intellectual elite as defenders of the Establishment.

The top 70

Now that we know something about the social characteristics and the political opinions of elite intellectuals, we can elect the more elite from the ranks of the mere elite. The election is not our doing, of course, and it follows once again the principle of colleague certification. We asked the elite intellectuals in our sample to name intellectuals who influenced them on cultural or social-political issues, or who they believed had high prestige in the intellectual community they felt themselves to be a part of. A number of different questions were asked, but each person who was polled could register only a single "vote" for a particular intellectual, no matter how many different questions he answered with the same name.[6]

Several caveats about our list of top intellectuals are in order.

[6]Here are the actual questions. Not every respondent was asked every question. The aim was to find *something* he could comfortably answer:

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First, it applies to 1970, when the interviews were undertaken, and represents the consensus of the leading intellectuals of the late 1960's, not the early 1970's. Second, the questions were asked in the context of an interview about Vietnam and about American social issues. Despite the fact that half the direct questions asked for cultural leaders and half for social-political ones, respondents may have been influenced by the context to slight literary persons and to emphasize social scientists. (There are a good number of social scientists among those interviewed, however, and the growth in importance of social science among intellectuals may be greater than has generally been recognized.) Third, not everyone was happy with our request for names. A leading fiction writer commented:

> I've been asked this question (who are important writers) recently by *Esquire*. I feel very strongly that writing is not a competitive sport, and as soon as you start grading writers as being more important or less important than other writers, then you completely misunderstand the fact that all writers are very much dependent on one another. This includes the bores, the fools. I've known unsuccessful writers. X for example, whose books were virtually unreadable, but whose contribution as an enthusiast and a conversationalist is of inestimable value. I don't think you can rank writers. I don't think you can grade them. As I say, we are all very dependent upon one another. One can't simply say that Saul Bellow is better than Ralph Ellison or that Norman Mailer is better than Kurt Vonnegut. I mean, it doesn't make any sense, because they are all very closely dependent on each other. It's a creative climate, an intellectual climate in which people can work freely and with pleasure.

We agree, of course, and that is why we have stressed the notion of a circle of intellectuals. Even with his objections, however, this respondent gave the names of intellectuals he considered important in various ways. Almost everyone else did too.

Following the precedent established by Moses, we hereby list the 70 "elders" of the American intellectual camp, as named by our "jurors." They are listed alphabetically within four general ranks.

---

1) What intellectuals who write on social-political issues have the highest prestige in the intellectual circle or circles that you are closest to?
2) What intellectuals who write on social-political issues do you think have the highest prestige in the intellectual community in general?
3) What intellectuals who write on cultural matters have the highest prestige in the intellectual circle or circles that you are closest to?
4) What intellectuals who write on cultural matters have the highest prestige in the intellectual community in general?
5) What intellectuals who write on both social-political and cultural matters have high prestige in the intellectual community as a whole?
6) Could you tell me the names of the persons whose views on social-political issues in general have most influenced your own thinking?
7) Could you tell me the names of those people whose general views on cultural issues have most influenced your own?

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The 70 Most Prestigious Contemporary American Intellectuals (1970)

Ranks 1 to 10 (2 tied for 10th place)

Daniel Bell
Noam Chomsky
John Kenneth Galbraith
Irving Howe
Dwight MacDonald
Mary McCarthy
Norman Mailer
Robert Silvers
Susan Sontag
Lionel Trilling
Edmund Wilson

Ranks 11 to 20

Hannah Arendt
Saul Bellow
Paul Goodman
Richard Hofstadter
Irving Kristol
Herbert Marcuse
Daniel Patrick Moynihan
Norman Podhoretz
David Riesman
Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

Ranks 21 to 25 (numerous ties)

W. H. Auden
Norman O. Brown
Theodore Draper
Jason Epstein
Leslie Fiedler
Edgar Friedenberg
John Gardner
Eugene Genovese
Richard Goodwin
Michael Harrington
Pauline Kael
Alfred Kazin
Murray Kempton
George Lichtheim
Walter Lippmann
Marshall McLuhan[1]
Hans Morgenthau
I. F. Stone
C. Vann Woodward

Ranks 26 and 27 (numerous ties)

Edward Banfield
Isaiah Berlin[1]
Barbara Epstein
R. Buckminster Fuller
Nathan Glazer
Elizabeth Hardwick
Robert Heilbroner
Sidney Hook
Ada Louise Huxtable
George F. Kennan
Christopher Lasch
Seymour Martin Lipset
Robert Lowell
Robert K. Merton
Barrington Moore
Willie Morris
Lewis Mumford
Reinhold Niebuhr
Robert Nisbet
Phillip Rahv
James Reston
Harold Rosenberg
Philip Roth
Richard Rovere
Bayard Rustin
Franz Schurman
John Simon
George Steiner
Diana Trilling
James Q. Wilson

[1]Though McLuhan is a Canadian and Berlin an Englishman, both men have spent enough time at American universities to warrant their inclusion on our list.

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The reader is welcome to try a do-it-yourself analysis of the list. One should note that leadership here is not the same as "getting around" a good deal, and hence not the same as centrality in a social circle, though it is of course related. A more accurate analysis is possible by comparing those with more "votes" to those with fewer votes utilizing the entire list of 172 intellectuals. We wish to emphasize that for administrative reasons not everyone in the top 70 was on our list to be interviewed, so there is no guarantee that inclusion in the list means that we tried to interview the person, much less that he was actually interviewed. But it is also true that our sample includes a large number of important intellectuals, and that among the 172 on the list, the sample of those interviewed is biased only in terms of the relative paucity of important free-lancers. These are in short supply mainly because they do not have a secretary who forces them to meet their social obligations. Presumably, this is precisely why they are free-lancers. Only the top 70 are shown here. Actually, half the members of the list of 172 received less than two "votes," 20 per cent between two and five votes, and 30 per cent six or more.

The first surprise is that age is *not* related to these ratings. The reason for this is probably that much older intellectuals tend to slip a bit, especially since our ratings give points for being around and for being active discussion partners. Younger intellectuals do not make the list at all unless they are quite exceptional. The net result is that age does not affect an elite intellectual's rank. Another surprise is that living in the New York Metropolitan Area (our 50-mile district) is *not* related to prestige. The New York "Mafia" is seriously overrated.

Some stereotypes about intellectuals do seem to be borne out by the characteristics of intellectuals with the most votes. More than 40 per cent of the Jews received six or more votes as compared with about 15 per cent of the non-Jews. Forty per cent of the humanities professors received six or more votes, while only 25 per cent of non-academics and social science professors had six or more votes. Radicalism in one's youth is strongly associated with prestige; none of those who said they were conservatives or middle-of-the-roaders in their senior year in college received six or more votes, but 60 per cent of those who were college radicals did. The association between the radicalism of one's current views and prestige is of much more modest proportions. On the big issue of the day, the war in Vietnam, there is no difference in votes between those who want to get out now and those who favor a coalition and more gradual withdrawal.

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(On the other hand, very few of those favoring preventing a Communist takeover got any votes at all.) And on the whole, the number of contemporary "radicals," self-proclaimed or otherwise, in the top 70 is small indeed.

Social circles of intellectuals are very much an historical phenomenon—their characteristics are highly related to the time and place in which they appear and the institutional pegs upon which they hang. The elite American intellectuals as we saw them in 1970 were basically the same ones who came to power in the late 1940's and early 1950's, as is shown by a study by Tom Conway. Their social characteristics and their political orientations are still tied to the circumstances and issues of the Great Depression, Nazism, and Stalinism and anti-Stalinism. On current issues they are not necessarily avant-garde, though they are more liberal than comparable groups. The war in Vietnam and revisionist views of the Cold War did succeed in "electing" some new faces, but despite the impression some have of the *New York Review of Books,* the new organ of the intellectual elite, such persons have not made a major dent in the ranks of the elite intellectuals. The problems of race relations have brought in some blacks, but none have been especially new to the scene. The "cultural revolution" (drugs, rock music, and the like) and the new style of radical politics also brought in a few new faces, but by now most have dropped out of major intellectual social circles.[7] If the generation under 30 has formed new circles, they are not yet cohesive enough for us to identify and find them. If they exist at all, they exist in isolated pockets, not national networks, and in 1972 we would be hard pressed radically to change our 1970 sample of intellectuals.

Symptomatic of this confusion is the inability of most intellectuals we interviewed to name their replacements. Some have felt that the whole idea of an intellectual elite is passing. I doubt it. The patient is quite alive and well, thank you, but he is getting older and his heirs have not yet made themselves known.

[7]Most of the writers associated with this revolution—the "new journalists," avant-garde art and film critics, style-setters like Andy Warhol, etc.—have made little if any contact with the intellectuals we have identified in this study, and therefore were less likely to be mentioned by our interviewers.

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CURRENT READING

Sex and Revolution Biz

From *Publisher's Weekly,* August 7, 1972:

> Pinnacle is rushing out a special on Angela Davis, "The People vs. Angela Davis" by Charles R. Ashman. The $1.25 paperback will be ready this month, and the author will tour thirteen cities during August and September to promote the book, appearing on radio and TV and on college campuses.
>
> In addition to promotion of the newest titles in its Executioner series and Destroyer series (according to Pinnacle, the Destroyer books are currently outselling the Executioner titles), Pinnacle will launch a major promotion in September for "The Mistress Book" a "how to" (get one, keep one, etc.) manual by Jim Deane.
>
> In October, Pinnacle will bring out an original paperback, "Your Sexual Future" by Robert Chartham, the author of "The Sensuous Couple," and the first novel in a new series, Victors and Lords (the first book has the same title), about the land battles of the Crimean War, by V. A. Stuart. Mr. Stuart is the author of "The Hazard Saga," a novel about the sea battles of the era. A second "Hazard" title will also be published by Pinnacle in October.
>
> In November Pinnacle have ready "Recycle Your Lifestyle" by psychologist Dr. Paul Mok, which offers suggestions for improving one's life through the use of "psycho-energetics," and "Massage: The Other Loving Touch" by Stephen Lewis, an original illustrated with photographs.

The Next Word You Will Hear . . .

We know that esoteric words, used originally in small cenacles where they become code signals, like three knocks on a speakeasy door, for entry into the conventicles of thought, inevitably pass into the common tongue. Like Charon, *Time* magazine paddles back and forth to row the hermetic word out of the underworld into the light of cultural discourse. Each decade has its intellectual word, just as young lovers have their song; in the past 40 years we have seen this procession:

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The 1930's—*ideology*
The 1940's—*existential*
The 1950's—*alienation*
The 1960's—*charisma*

To see how the process operates, let us look briefly at the trajectory of each term:

Ideology. For all its association with contemporary politics, the word, oddly enough, was rarely used before the 1930's. People talked of *ideas;* if they were mannered, of *Weltanschauungen,* but not of ideology. Although the word is associated with Marx, the key texts in which it appears (*The German Ideology* and the *Essays on the Jewish Question)* either were unpublished in Marx's lifetime (as in the case of the first) or suppressed by Marxist publishing houses (in the case of the second, for its anti-Semitism). These texts became known only with the first full collection of Marx's early writings in the 1920's.

The term "ideology" came into intellectual use in the 1930's with the English translation of Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (by Louis Wirth and Edward Shils). Mannheim had used "ideology" to denote a *conservative* style of thought, which justifies any existing order, but a word so protean soon changes shape, and it has come to mean a secular religion (Jules Monnerot), a cultural system as against a system of science (Clifford Geertz), and even all political philosophy and discourse (Henry David Aiken). By now, it is so fuzzy it is fit only for popular use. It is enough to make one believe in the end of ideology.

Existential. The word illustrates what Arthur Koestler once called "the French Flu," the most galloping intellectual virus known to modern man. The term had led the most arcane of intellectual existences shuttling to and fro in modern philosophy (from Husserl to Heidegger, from essence to existence), when Jean-Paul Sartre proclaimed existentialism as a humanism, a historicity, and a mode of heroism, and the word became the noun, verb, adjective, and adverb of the intellectual's vocabulary.

For some semi-skilled intellectuals, like a hagiographer of Robert Kennedy, *existential* was the only adjective in their vocabulary; since then, this radical acolyte has become a defender of middle America's blue-collar rank and file and a writer of populist manifestoes. But there remain doughty defenders of "character-defining action," as was seen most recently in the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times,* where an editor of a New York underground paper denounced Yippies Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, the quondam heroes of the counter-culture, for selling out to McGovern, and applauded the fact that "the existential warriors, the Zippies," had confronted McGovern at the Doral Beach Hotel. Thus the fate of existentialism, running the gamut from *y* to *z.*

Alienation. The word was brought here by the "Frankfurt School" in the 1940's and surfaced, inevitably, a decade later. The Frankfurt School, or the Critical Marxists (critical, that is, not of Marx, but

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of all reality except Marxism, which—being rational and real—did not need Criticism), was made up of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, *und so weiter.* Having been professors *manqués* in Germany, inevitably they were alienated from American life, and—after becoming established—they proceeded to proclaim it. But softly. To read the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung,* their theoretical magazine, one needed to know Aesop. Thus, instead of writing "Marx" they said "the young Hegel"; instead of "capitalism," the code word was "technological reality."

When pop sociology became established in the 1950's, alienation became its theme. But now loudly. Loud enough, 20 years later, for George McGovern to use the term as a diagnosis of American life. And in that sense, it has become his campaign slogan: "Alienated of America, Unite . . ."

Charisma is a term associated with Max Weber who used it to describe a political authority that rests on magical personal appeal. Rumor has it that the word was introduced into the American vocabulary by a renegade sociologist who was seeking to destroy American journalism but was hoist by his own petard. Today, of course, almost everybody has charisma, almost everybody, that is, except for Richard Nixon and George McGovern.

And now for the 1970's. What epigenetic word slouches forth to be heard? *The Public Interest,* as a public service, offers two candidates: *elitist* and *reification.*

Elitist, of course, is closest to the surface. Perhaps it has already lost its esoteric quality. Who knows, any longer, that it derives from Mosca, Michels, and Pareto, and achieved a bastardized American birth through the midwifery of Harold Lasswell, James Burnham, and C. Wright Mills. But in a populist society, *elitist* is a handy stick for all sides and for all seasons. In the *New York Times* Op-Ed page, that elitist sounding board for the *vox populi,* Jeffrey St. John denounces "public broadcasting" as appealing only to elitists, and concludes that therefore the U.S. government should not provide a subsidy. In *The Village Voice,* where the radical shtick meet to read, and devour each other, Jimmy Breslin calls his fellow McGovern delegates who had voted for Sissy Farenthold instead of Tom Eagleton "elitist bastards." In the "New Human Services Newsletter," Frank Riessman sounds the note for a new class war: "A major deterrent to improved, humanized service practice is *professional elitism* and this is a political, constituency oriented problem. The professionals and their establishment will not easily give up their special status and power. This must be fought by the new professionals (the paraprofessionals), the consumers, the students, all of whom have strong interests opposed to traditional elitism." Not to be outdone, President Nixon, in responding to the report of the Environmental Council, according to the *New York Times,* "said at one point that the environment was in danger of becoming an 'elitist' issue and that the Council should 'reach down and include the fellow who never went to college.'" And, in the Letters Column

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of *The Village Voice*, that Miss Lonelyhearts of the counter-culture, a trans-sexual person denounces lesbian Jill Johnston for her "trans-vestite-hating . . . elitist and authoritarian stance." All in one week, and from just two newspapers. *Eliti* and *populi, verso et recto, en* garde.

Reification (rhymes with deification) is, admittedly, the most cenobitic word of all. Can it come out of the cave? Well, look at *charisma*. The term is central to the Marxist heresiarch, Georg Lukacs (who bit it off from Hegel), and signifies a world where individuals are reduced to things. It is, of course, a fancy version of *alienation*, and bears a sibling relation to it, as *Entfremdung* does to *Verdinglichung*. In a more general sense, reification would mean any form of irrational existence, or the inability of an individual to step outside his world and become critical and rational. As George Lichtheim has put it:

> To Marx, as any Hegelian, the actual world of empirical perception was only an imperfect realization—at times, indeed, a caricature—of the real or rational world, in which man's essential nature (his rationality) will have overcome the *reified existence* he leads while the surrounding object-world is not perceived as the product of his own creativity. The attainment of this liberated state is the work of history, whose dialectic is not disclosed by empirical perception but by critical (philosophical) reflection on the totality of the process.

So, if you live a reified existence, or have a reified consciousness, you are not authentic (at best, just empirical) and cannot perceive the real or rational world. It is the perfect conjugation for the put-down. You are reified; I am rational. Think of the next campaign slogan: "Unmask the reified Republicans." Take it away, Dick Goodwin.

The Declaration of Dai Dong

One of the most persistent, innocent, utopian illusions that has ruled the modern mind is the thought that *if only* the "good guys" of the world, unencumbered by such nasty things as interests to protect, could get together to work out a program for mankind, then, in a flash, the air would be cleared and mankind would know the way—forward. At Stockholm, in June 1972, such a meeting did take place. Not the official gathering of delegates to the UN Environmental Conference—they only represented governments, and "the interests." But the "good guys," the true, the good, and the disinterested. They talked about the environment and mankind and what had to be done, and out of it came the Declaration of Dai Dong. What was it? Let an observer, Ross Gelbspan, writing in *The Village Voice* of June 15, 1972, tell:

> The most promising of the pre-conference activities was the Dai Dong Conference, which brought together 35 scientists from as many countries in a lovely, landscaped mansion outside Stockholm—almost like

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mini-Dumbarton Oaks—to hammer out a manifesto, a people's declaration to be read at the UN plenary session. The declaration would show, by its conviction and specificity, just how anemic is the UN's own declaration on the environment. The Dai Dong conferees are independent and aware scientists from the Third World and the developed countries (Eastern and Western) who are not bound by any interests or committed to any political positions. They agree at the beginning (like just about everyone else in the city except the official American delegation) that the problems of global poisoning, of land destruction, of war, malnutrition, and starvation—that all these are inter-related consequences of an economic system which exploits nature and man for the purpose of its own unobstructed growth. Just about everyone at the conference agrees on what is wrong with the world. The declaration will specify what is needed to make it right.

One working session I attended began discussing the problem of sovereignty. They began with two provisional sentences: "No nation has an inalienable right of sovereignty over its own environment because its activities will affect the total environment. No nation has an inalienable right of sovereignty over its own resources because natural resources are unequally distributed over the globe and must be allotted on the basis of need and preserved for future generations."

"This is one place where we really challenge the UN," Kenneth Lawton of the U. K. tells the group. A Swiss participant wants the statement strengthened: "We should say that the whole idea of national sovereignty is obsolete and a danger to human survival." But Dr. Henry Regier, of Canada, makes the point that the present system of sovereignty may be preventing potentially disastrous usurpation of power by the multinational corporations who might move into a vacuum created by areas of ceded sovereignty.

An Indian biologist insists on the point that we are talking about all life, not just human life, and that to all life national boundaries are irrelevant and destructive. The Swiss speaker, Jean Mussard, concedes that to do away with sovereignty might open the door to a new global bureaucracy, but still insists that there is a definite need for an international form of government to prevent the developed nations from destroying the earth and keeping the poor majority of the world at the mercy of hunger and disease.

At this point, Dr. Dora Chizea, a Nigerian public health doctor, tells the session: "I, personally, find it very hard now on paper to write off my own country's sovereignty. My country has never had sovereignty over its own resources. Many of the African countries are only now, through their coups and civil wars and power struggles, beginning to find their own national identity. We have never really been countries and now, when we are just beginning to discover our national existences, you want to take it all away from us. We are shedding a great deal of blood to find ourselves. No, we are not willing to give up the concept of sovereignty until we have it to give up."

The session continues. At the end, the only thing the group can agree on is that it needs a totally new ideological framework based on a new

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perception of reality. But no one present knows what that is. They all agree on what they don't want, but none of them can agree on what they do want. The final decision of the group is that they are all "prisoners of their political and cultural ideologies to the extent that we simply do not know what to do." Perhaps, they agree, the next generations will know the answers. We do not.

And so the final Dai Dong Declaration is, regrettably, an unimpressive document full of rage at the present excesses and imbalances, but unable to state clearly any world policy on population, on sovereignty, even on war. On this last point, all they can agree to say is: "Among the most critical problems that constitute an existing and accelerating threat to human survival is war. . . . As long as we tolerate this waste and the destructiveness of war itself, we cannot achieve the stable environment on which our survival depends. Yet the determination to abolish war must be accompanied by a recognition of the right of peoples to struggle to liberate themselves from national and international systems that oppress them. Those who most earnestly seek an end to war must affirm their solidarity with their fellow humans engaged in such a struggle, while simultaneously insisting on the need to develop effective nonviolent methods of solving the social and international conflicts of a world in danger of an annihilating war."

All of which says that a group of globally concerned, intelligent, aware, well-meaning people—with no axes to grind or interests to protect—are as crippled as the most obligated politician when it comes to working out some kind of program to save civilization. . . .

"Qui Gagne": Labor or Capital?

The shrill debates about the effect of wage and price controls bring into the statistical marketplace all the skills of the partisan advocates. The judicious selection of the proper index, choice of the right base year, selection from year to year are all respectable techniques. Thus, since August 1971, when controls went into effect, wages have gone up six per cent and profits 15 per cent. Yet if one looks at relative shares in a longer historical perspective, a different picture is drawn. Speaking at a League for Industrial Democracy conference—honoring George Meany—Yale economist Henry Wallich had this to say:

> Corporate profits . . . must be viewed cyclically rather than seasonally adjusted. Profits fluctuate widely during the business cycle. During the post-World War II period, they dropped in 11 years out of 25. Labor income (compensation of employees, including fringes) dropped in two years. Profits are rising sharply this year, and rose sharply in 1971. In 1969 and 1970, however, they fell, and in 1971 they had not yet recovered to their previous peak level of 1968. Compensation of employees in 1971, on the other hand, was 25 per cent above 1968.
>
> Such year to year comparisons . . . are strongly influenced by the choice of base years. A better picture is given by a comparison of the ratio of corporate profits to GNP over 10-year averages. For the 10 years 1946-1955, this ratio averaged 12.4 per cent, during 1962-1971 it

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averaged 9.8 per cent. In 1971, it stood at 8.1 per cent and is now undoubtedly rising.

For the same 25-year period, the share of labor income in GNP (compensation of employees, including fringes) rose from 56.5 per cent in 1946 to 61.3 per cent in 1971. Labor can thus note with satisfaction that it appears to have materially raised its income share relative to that of profits.

The share of labor today is far and away the dominant component in any national income aggregate, whether we look at GNP, national income, or personal consumption. Labor's chances for increasing its income by absorbing a larger part of the total are limited, because it already has so large a part of that total. Particular sectors of the labor force may gain at the expense of other sectors. But as one of the two chief factors of production, labor's primary interest clearly is in the enlargement of total output. . . .

The Armenian-Swiss-Unitarian Problem

Writing in *New York* magazine shortly before the Democratic convention in Miami, Edward N. Costikyan, a leading Manhattan reform Democrat, offered these bemused thoughts about quotas in politics:

> I used to go to state and national conventions of the Democratic Party. I used to represent my assembly district, the eighth (south) of Manhattan, in the New York County Democratic Executive Committee and the Democratic Committee of New York County in state Democratic councils. But, since the so-called McGovern guidelines, which require that the delegates to the national convention reflect the proportion of women, blacks, and younger people in the population at large, I have lost my constituencies. In those days, it did not seem so incongruous for a half-Armenian, half-Swiss Unitarian to represent a district which had few, if any, Swiss, few, if any, Armenians, and few, if any, Unitarians, let alone a county and state with only a handful of any of these exotic types. . . .
>
> It's all changed. The Democratic National Committee has told us to forget the old-fashioned nonsense that resulted in the voters' selection of a male Armenian-Swiss amateur conductor of oratorios to represent them as a reform district leader and delegate and county leader. Now, the McGovern guidelines tell us, women must be represented by women, blacks by blacks, young by the young, and, I suppose, rich by the rich, poor by the poor. And the Democratic National Committee further tells us that unless delegations mirror the color, sex, and age characteristics of the constituency, the non-conforming delegates must justify their election and explain why they are the wrong color, wrong sex, and wrong age.
>
> This leaves us non-young, non-female, non-black, Armenian-Swiss Unitarians with something of a problem. The black men have organized, and the black women, too. The young have. The women have. And so, if we non-young, male, non-black, Armenian-Swiss Unitarians want to participate, I guess we'll have to organize, too.
>
> Too bad. There aren't too many of us. Maybe the Democratic National

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Committee will give us cumulative voting so that we can be represented once every third or fourth national convention. Or maybe we can make a deal with the Greeks, or with the Albanians.

Or maybe the Democratic Party will abandon this nonsense before it has lost the allegiances of those who do not fit into the neat pigeonholes its sociologist-advisers have invented and its stunned leadership, still shaken by the convulsions that racked the party in the 1968 convention, has thoughtlessly adopted. What was wrong with the Democratic Party and its convention in 1968 will not be cured by the invoking of a quota system.

Meanwhile, it may be that we Armenian-Swiss Unitarians will have to organize so that, like the recently organized black women, we can hold together and for the first time "get something for our vote" in order to survive under the present political rules. But one wonders if it really is progress—if, instead of a triumphant expression of the New Politics, it isn't a very unsatisfactory expression of the Old.

What's on the Charts in China?

"Red China's Greatest Hits—The Popular Music 857,000,000 Chinese Are Singing." So read the title of a recent advertisement, published in *The Village Voice*, for an album of "popular" songs from China. The ad went on as follows:

For the first time in the United States, you can now hear the music that entertains, amuses and galvanizes into action one quarter of the Earth's population—music that is fascinating to listen to, and important to have. Hearing it is next best to visiting the mainland itself. It will deepen your understanding of the Chinese people, their culture, and the Revolutionary movement.

"East is Red," available now because of the recent relaxation of tensions between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China, is a collection of 14 popular songs from China. These are the melodies now being heard and sung by countless Chinese workers as they march to their jobs, as they work on the collective, as they meet in their commune. . . .

Among the hit songs you will hear:

1. "Chairman Mao's Works Shine with a Golden Light"
2. "Every River and Mountain is Linked with Peking"
3. "The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention"

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DANIEL BELL is Professor of Sociology at Harvard. The essay published here has been adapted from the concluding section of his book, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, which Basic Books will publish early in 1973. In this version most of the citations and footnotes have been eliminated.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

We had hoped to print in this issue a debate on David Armor's "The Evidence on Busing," which appeared in No. 28 (Summer 1972). We have received a lengthy and detailed critique by Professor Thomas Pettigrew of Harvard and three of his colleagues. Unfortunately, this critique arrived too late for Professor Armor to write a reply in time to meet the Fall issue deadline. We have therefore postponed this exchange, which will be published in our Winter issue.—Editors

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